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LAST PATROL
by George C. Appell

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Kendall W. Goodwyn, Editor

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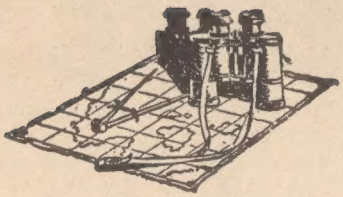

Last Patrol

by
GEORGE C. APPELL

Trading space for time is one of the trickiest operations in the grab-bag of war. . . . A close-up of the Korean conflict.

THE WEATHER was filthy that week. It was weather that came down moist from soggy skies—no one had seen a plane in two days—and it was weather that breathed from muddy valley floors in a noisome miasma that clung to rice paddies, smoked through mulberry groves and stuck to the skin.

Colonel Mastrick tried to get it off by wiping at his freckled forearms with a grimy handkerchief. But still it wouldn't come off. It was like invisible grease. He was sitting on an up-ended cloverleaf of ammunition under the camouflage net. He was naked from his narrow hips to his cropped, gray hair and his faded denim trousers and rag-limp boots were caked with the drying mud of a battery position, not the spattered mud of the roads. The roads were for infantry.

Some of the infantry was going up. Some of the infantry was always going up—tripping, slipping, lurching, stumbling. Infantry, glassy-eyed and slack-mouthed and bent forward in the perennial position of men who fight on foot. The parades and flags and music were way back, far back. All the way back in Japan and farther. Back in the States.

Mastrick tried to think of the States but he couldn't. He couldn't because some of the infantry was always coming down. Litter-borne, most of it, for the medics wouldn't risk too many jeeps up in the valley. Most of the remainder was crutching along on rifle stocks, gray-faced and empty-eyed. They still didn't know what had happened to them. Infantry seldom does, until after it has happened.

Mastrick got off the cloverleaf and stuffed the handkerchief into his trousers and felt his lower pockets for a cigarette. He found one, squashed and damp, and managed to light it.

The radio sergeant in the communications jeep was grinning at the colonel through a three-day beard. "Kind of like bein' on a life raft, isn't it, sir?"

Mastrick regarded the man through his first exhale. "What do you think it is?"

More walking wounded were trailing south out of the valley, glancing once at the battery positions and then glancing away. There would be accusation in their eyes and they were too sore and hurt and tired to accuse anybody of anything. Let Mac San do the accusing. He was supposed to be back near Pusan someplace, sucking his corncob and pondering the imponderables of war. MacArt', the South Koreans called him. And winked and hooked a thumb upward in the victory sign. But there was no victory here—only the boot-chuck of limping wounded and, sometimes, the high hum of a plane. Nobody knew whose plane it was, and nobody cared. The plane couldn't see them; they couldn't see the plane.

Mastrick dragged his slumbrous eyes past the jeep, past the shaded breechings of the 105s; past the stacked ammunition and so to where Captain Phillips sat on a ration case, staring at nothing.

Phillips was wearing his helmet. He was wearing his denim tops too, and his side-arms and field glasses and canteen. The field glasses were slung behind his left hip, very regular.

From time to time Phillips took a twist out of the class ring on the middle finger of his right hand. It was as if the captain, by that act, could conjure up a million well-armed genii to hurl back the forces that for a week now had been thrusting ever south. South from the Parallel to Seoul to Suwon and Wonju and so to Chechon and the Chungju Valley that was the latchkey to the middle peninsula.

The radio sergeant stiffened. The crystal *clink!* of a mike switch was sharp in everyone's ears.

Mastrick spun fast about.—Maybe we have a target!—The planes hadn't seen anything for days. The weather was allied to the invaders.

"Easy Fox Dog . . . Easy Fox Dog . . . Over." The sergeant's face was tense. Mastrick thought, I'll have to pass the word to Phillips to alert you for a shave.

The sergeant's rubbery lips were moving at the mike. "Roger—out." He glanced first to Phillips and then to Mastrick. "Colonel, that was division. Prepare to withdraw on their order at—"

"Report to the battery commander." Mastrick started searching for his denim tops. He should have had them on as an example, if for no other reason. They were protection against flashburns and mosquitoes and the rightful wrath of MacArt', who liked his merry men geared very GI.

Phillips rose from the ration case and slouched toward Mastrick. Good-looking youngster, Phillips. Old eyes in a kid face. Mastrick knew that he was twenty-six. The colonel was fifty-seven. "Get that, Phillips?"

"Yes, sir." The captain smiled wearily. "We've been static for 'most a week."

"Division likes to use its net." Mastrick spat out his cigarette and watched it hiss into a puddle. He found his denim tops on a rammer staff and put them on.

Then he searched for his field glasses.

"On the jeep," Phillips said.

The sergeant handed them to Mastrick and the colonel slung them and squeezed them next to his canteen. "I'd like to go up." He shouldn't have been up this far and he knew it. But hell, when you're in command and your forward batteries are supporting troops trying to form a line of resistance and the enemy is massing for another lunge at you and . . .

Phillips was smiling. "The colonel'd be back in Seoul if he had his way." Phillips wasn't bucking, he was speaking a fact. "Lieutenant Underhill's going up, soon's we hear something solid."

"Underhill? Oh yes—Underhill." Square type with gun-blue jaws and steady brown eyes. Good type for advanced liaison.

Phillips toyed with his class ring, not thinking about it. He was thinking of a bridge they had crossed during the retreat. A bridge over the Chechon Gorge. If his 105s could get across it, as they had, then the Commie tanks could get across it. And if the Commie tanks did that, it would be goodbye valley, goodbye forward line. So long to about twenty miles of terrain, all the way back to Chungju. The battery was registered on that bridge, but registration was no good unless you had something on the coordinates that you wanted to hit. Phillips didn't want to hit the bridge unless something was on it. Maybe MacArt' had plans for it—such as counter-attacking all the way up to Wonju.

Phillips said, "If the planes could spot something I could hit it. This battery could drop shells into a thimble."

And Mastrick was amused. "A moving thimble?"

"Any thimble, sir."

Their eyes met, locked, and flinched. For each was recalling the frightsome road that had brought them down this far.

—Fire and fall back!—It was a joke, a nasty joke.

Trading space for time is one of the trickiest operations in the grab-bag of warfare. A general must be very sure of his ground in order to do it and he must face-up to a sanguine estimate of loss before he makes his decision and he must be prepared to see those fatally-neat totals click through his head in the form of casualty reports that will continue to filter into him until the time is gained for the space traded.

Mastrick and Phillips and hundreds of others had seen those totals in the shape of twisted bodies and charred uniforms and shreds of burnt bone and dented, empty helmets. Necessary casualties, they had been called.

The colonel was feeling for another cigarette when the rushing noise

hurtled across the upper spaces. Faces flew up, green-white with fear. Someone bleated a warning to hit the dirt.

The thing was howling right down onto them.

It shot from the smoky mists and streaked low overhead and rose and vanished as suddenly as it had come.

Faces came down, perspiring. Somebody cleared his throat.

Mastrick discovered that his mouth had dried out and his tongue was sticking to his teeth.

The radio sergeant flung spit and wiped his mouth. "Aussie."

"Australian?"

"Yes, sir. I saw the markings."

Mastrick drew out the cigarette and lighted it. "Maybe he'll see a target."

The thought came to him that perhaps that pilot would become a casualty instead. Would run into a flight of Yaks or skim too low and take some AA full in the engine and come apart and plunge into the hills and explode.

A necessary sacrifice, indeed. That was the way you won wars, parlaying one sacrifice upon another until you had a stack somewhat higher than the soakage point, after which you lashed out with your final wallop.

Men are killed, other men take their place. Even in death there is progression toward a goal.

The colonel was facing the road, watching another file of infantry thrust up from the south. It occurred to him that no wounded had come down for quite some time now.

Earlier, there had been the snatting of small arms fire. Then silence. Toward noon, Phillips had ventured to ask a medic how it was up there. But the medic had merely stared at him.

Phillips, now, stepped next to Mastrick. "If we could get some spotting!"

"Maybe that Aussie'll call signals for us."

Phillips doubted it. "Too fast." He was twisting his ring again. "And too much weather." He sniffed once. "Too much weather is all we have too much of."

Low overhead came the rushing noise. A fleeting shape disturbed the ceiling mists and flashed north out of sight.

The infantry tripped past, damp and cursing. Rain plucked at the puddles and pot holes and pattered on helmets and mixed with salt-rimed denims and soaked into straining bodies.

"Their opinion of the artillery must be pretty low." Mastrick dropped his cigarette and placed a boot on it. He exhaled easily. "We haven't shown much, though."

"Not yet, sir. I can't see why we don't roll the guns up in close support—" Phillips broke off, flushing slightly. It was all they could do to keep the hubs clear, let alone move the wheels through that muck.

A bulky lieutenant tramped toward them, helmet strap swinging. He addressed Phillips.

"Captain, if all this dogface is

moving up, there must be something there."

Phillips tilted his head to Mastrick. "The colonel, here, wants to go up with you when you go."

"The colonel?" Lieutenant Underhill stared a moment, not blinking. "Yes, sir."

The radio sergeant made a small throat noise. His set clinked into life and his furred jaws worked at the mike. Then he flung an arm at Phillips, as if to hold him there. Then he faced sharp about: "Cap'n —armor massing other side of Chechon Gorge!" The man needed to swallow in order to get the rest out: "R.A.A.F. spotted it."

"The Aussies?" A brittle, greedy look passed between Mastrick and Phillips. Underhill sprinted heavily toward his gear to snatch a map case.

Mastrick snapped his fingers. "My jeep—" But already the colonel's driver was kicking the engine over and backing out of camouflage to point on the road. The last of the infantry was tramping past and the jeep driver braked slowly and stopped. Battery crews were carefully removing helmets and tugging down knitted caps; a silent corporal dropped open the breech of No. 1 piece and there was the soft cluck of well-oiled metal on well-oiled metal.

Underhill was huddled behind the driver now and the colonel clambered in and perched on the edge of the righthand bucket and placed his map case across his lap. "We'll find your thimble for you, Captain . . . Stand by!"

They jounced drunkenly onto the road and swung north after the infantry and presently were crowding its rear. Underhill had the walkie-talkie to his cheek, testing to Easy Fox Dog. He would test every quarter-mile, for the terrain there is abrupt and ragged and a sudden hill can chop off reception with the finality of an axe.

They rocked past the dogface replacements and one of the cleated tires flung flaps of mud into the file and a man cursed foully and the colonel faced inboard to smile. Mastrick had been a soldier for a long time; it had been his chosen manner of living for thirty-five years and something of himself was left behind with that file of men who were behind the jeep now, plugging north with faces down and shoulders low.

A washout was just ahead. A shell had broken the wall of a paddy on the right and the trapped water had seeped left against the opposite paddy and the driver cracked his gears into low and pressed the brakes once.

The colonel estimated the gorge to be one crowflight mile and five road miles ahead. "Rush it, driver. You'll bog, otherwise."

The driver went into second and gunned his engine and the jeep growled into the washout and slithered through it.

"Easy Fox Dog . . . Come in." Underhill was speaking quietly, urgently. "Over." The jeep sagged dangerously as it left the washout and Underhill grabbed for balance. "Out."

An uneasy sibilance bothered the upper spaces and passed on. A shell riding south. Exhilaration tightened the colonel's diaphragm and lightened his head slightly. He hadn't been under fire in some time, not counting the past week. Not since that time in Huertgen Forest when his guns were crashing at zero elevation to smash the waddling Tiger tanks fronting the breakthrough. And now he had his own regiment and he was, by God, division artillery officer and he was going to function where he thought he could do the most good . . . Wasn't it Georgie Patton who'd said, You can't push a piece of spaghetti from the rear, you have to pull it from the front . . .?

Another high sibilance breathed overhead and was gone. That would be the North Korean First, softening up the approaches for its armor. The colonel thought of the bridge over the gorge and nudged the driver for more speed. The jeep was bucking like a horse and the colonel had to hang onto his map case with one hand and the grip plate with the other.

The terrain ahead was billowy and gray and wet. Farther ahead, shaggy trees bearded the crest of a slope, and Mastrick knew that just beyond them was the gorge and the bridge. The road now snaked across the muddy billows of land, following the low ground, keeping to its trench. And then the jeep was snoring past a small cutback where a soiled medic was kneeling to a blanketed stretcher and two other medics were squatting at either end. The colonel waved to them. "Faster."

"Easy Fox Dog . . . Come in."

Unaccountably, the colonel thought of his wife. He glanced down at his watch, steadying himself against the sway of the jeep, and deducted fourteen hours from three-thirty in the afternoon. Fourteen hours east, she was, and the clock over the imitation-log fireplace would be pointing to half-past one in the morning and maybe the canasta would be breaking up and Sally would be saying good-night to Major Sims and his wife. The colonel's daughter was home to have her second baby and she'd be there too to make a fourth and perhaps after the Simses left, those women would talk of the colonel. Or of his son, stationed in Frankfort. It didn't make any difference, really, for when Army wives speak of one of their men they are thinking of them all.

"Over . . . Out."

And the colonel thought of the Dodgers. He'd put twenty dollars on the League pennant against the division provost-marshal's ten. In the easy days before this invasion, you merely tuned in on HLKA in Seoul and got the news from home. But now it was somewhat different.

A screech tore down out of the mists and thunder-clapped in black fury between two loops in the road.

The driver took his foot off the accelerator and glanced at the colonel.

"Keep going."

Underhill cleared his throat. "We were off the net for a minute, there, sir."

"These hills." Mastrick pointed. "That slope is higher, though. Where the trees are. You'll get reception there."

—If the Red tanks aren't poised hull-down with black snouts poking through the trees!—

"Jackass it, driver. I've got a date with a bridge."

A second screech hurtled from the low cloud cotton and detonated in a spinning column of wet and splintered shrubs. The hot, gaseous backblast washed over them and tingled their skins.

"Gas, you think, sir?" Underhill was crouching forward, helmet bobbing.

"No." The colonel pinched his nostrils and exhaled through his mouth and released his nostrils and inhaled swiftly. "No."

Underhill sat back. "Easy Fox Dog . . ."

If the Reds used gas it would complete a personal cycle for Mastrick. His first hours under fire had been notable for the steady prickle of mustard that came from them. For mustard gas, and the obscene, battered stumps of tree boles that marked a ridge in the Argonne. A ridge littered with crumpled scraps of khaki cloth and crushed button helmets.

". . . Out."

Then the jeep lurched around a bend in the sunken road and they saw the flattened infantry flung out left and right. They saw the fresh scars of slit trenches and they saw a man crawling from one trench to another and they saw two hunched men fussing with the water jacket of a machine gun.

"Hey the jeep!" A white face with a light beard appeared from a slit and two hands waved criss-cross. "Look out for mines!"

Mastrick nodded. "Slow down." He removed his helmet liner so he could hear better across the distance. "What's ahead? Of ours?"

"Not much." The man's eyes caught Mastrick's tarnished collar eagle. "Sir."

It came to Mastrick that this face in the slit trench was expressing the same surprise that Underhill had shown when Phillips told him the colonel was going forward. It made Mastrick feel better, somehow.

"Who are you?"

The face at the trench lip stiffened. "Yeager, sir. First lieutenant, infantry." He hooked a thumb back and forth. "E Company, holding."

"Well, Yeager, good luck . . . Drive it."

The jeep snarled forward and Mastrick told himself, Kids. Don't know a thing about soldiering, most of 'em. All the experience is packed into the rear areas and all the green flesh is forward . . . Except for my slightly higher-ranking carcass, by God.

"Easy Fox Dog . . ."

They could count the branches on the trees fringing the slope now and Mastrick opened his denim top and

shoved the map case inside and patted his holster. He placed his helmet liner on and worked it this way and that until the binder was comfortable.

". . . Over."

The jeep rolled fast down a slippery incline and picked up speed and spun up a rise and then they could count the leaves on the trees. There were no steel snouts there, no glimmer of binocular lenses, no dull wink of metal equipment. Anyway, the Aussies had spotted the armor north of the gorge, on the other side of the bridge.

"Out." Underhill coughed sandily. "Reception's O.K., sir."

A plane howled out of nothingness and rocked past and skimmed into the mists above the trees and left a dying hum in its wake.

"Ours," the driver breathed. "Where to now, sir?"

A banshee shriek split their ears and the world stood on end and the jeep tipped over slowly and gracefully and lay on its side strakes, upwheels revolving idly. Hot on them was the shell's back-breath. Mud and metal spattered back to earth and the afternoon took back its silence.

The driver was heavy and muscleless on Mastrick and he had to shove with both arms and one leg to get him off. The driver flopped over and lay spread in the mud and suddenly Underhill was sick.

The lieutenant was on his hands and knees, vomiting and gagging. Mastrick yanked his eyes from the macerated thing that had just asked *Where to now, sir?* and heaved himself to his feet and hauled Underhill up. "Where's the walkie? Go get it, then help me with the jeep."

Underhill had to use his canteen several times, gargling and spitting. "Shall we leave him there?"

"For the time being, yes . . . Got the radio?"

Underhill had the radio. Then together they put their weight against the jeep and plumped it back on four wheels and climbed in.

"You drive, Lieutenant. . . . See if you can start O.K. I don't think the engine was hit."

"Ignition's still on." Underhill kicked life from the engine. "They got us bracketed, I think."

Mastrick was weary, of a sudden. Weary, and a bit disgusted. "They're not going to waste H.E. on a jeep when they can get it with machine guns . . . Roll up to below the trees. Stay under the crest."

A high sibilance hurtled overhead and passed south.

That confirmed the colonel's theory. "They're firing by a pattern, by rote. They don't have any registrations down this far."

"I see." Underhill was feeling stronger. He piloted the jeep to the tree-line and braked and switched off.

"They're dropping them south of the valley, then dropping them north up the valley. That last one—that got the driver—that was the last one for this end. You noticed how we were following their strikes, so to

speak? And now they're sending them south of the valley again."

The colonel dismounted and pulled his map case free and sank to one knee and beckoned Underhill. "As I make it, the co-ordinates for the top of this slope are X 210.3—Y 95.6 The bridge, therefore, should be—" the colonel's pencil traced over the vellum— "X 211.3—95.5" Mastrick tucked the case under his arm and snagged out his pistol and got off his knee. "Let's have a look."

They frogged their way up into the tree-lined, ducked through the wet undergrowth and lay flat on the broad mound of the crest. Down-slope ahead of them was the bridge, half a mile away. Its cables were trembling to the shuddering impact of armor—of flat black tanks clanking across at one hundred yard intervals with muzzles elevated and turrets bristling. The bristles were air-cooled machine guns.

"Stalins," Underhill whispered.

"Unbuttoned. They must think this is routine reconnaissance." Mastrick let out his breath. "There's infantry this side. Mine layers, I guess."

Underhill had the radio to his ear, speaking softly. "Easy Fox Dog. . . . Easy Fox Dog . . ." He questioned Mastrick with level brown eyes.

The colonel nodded abruptly.

"X 211.3—95.5 . . . As ready."

Mastrick thought of Phillips back there, headset to ears, firing data in hand. Mastrick saw the wool-capped gunners shoving shells into breechings; saw the breechings click shut. Saw the crews crouch away and saw Phillips' mouth move. Saw the leaping gouts of smoke and flame belch from the 105s. Saw the breechings jerk in recoil . . . Saw the blocks dropped and saw the greasy smoke spew out.

Four thin whistles sounded, high up. The whistles became a sirening, a roar.

The North Korean mine layers folded into the ground and the lead Stalin shuddered in its treads as it left the shaking bridge and clawed at the south ledge of the gorge.

The roar swelled to a deafening howl and the low mists were fanned apart and four shells struck into the gorge and blew the bridge off its cables and flindered it to matchwood.

Three tanks side-slipped like tin toys and tumbled from sight as the fourth halted on the south ledge. Gray smoke rushed upward and dipped away and melted and was gone. The echo of the strike quavered for several moments before it died.

Underhill found his voice. "Easy Fox Dog . . . the bridge game is over."

"Tell 'em to elevate." Mastrick was brusque now. "See if Phillips can lay into . . . Let's see . . . 210.5.3—95.5.6" He pressed the pencil tip on a spot halfway between the crest and the gorge.

The mine layers were scampering up the slope toward the trees, lugging their gear by hand. After a moment, the tank grumbled in its treads and vibrated after them. Underhill took his mouth from the set and asked

Mastrick a question with one eye.

The mine layers toppled to their knees, to their elbows, as the next salvo ripped down from the mists.

The sirening became a roar, the roar a howl. The slope flew apart in an immense kaleidoscope of hurtling ruination. A heavy gun barrel rose majestically and hung on its arc and dropped back into the swirling smoke of the strikes. A cloth cap fluttered in mid-air, then dipped downward.

The slope became unveiled and its lewd nakedness was cluttered only with a smoking tank hull and burned flesh and—'way down—a man's legs. They were twitching, but even as Mastrick looked, they went still.

"That's not all, sir." Underhill was saying hoarsely, "Easy Fox Dog . . . Easy Fox Dog."

Mastrick saw movement in the powder-singed trees up and down the slope. Men on their bellies were wriggling up on each side. A voice commenced to hiss and quack and buzz. Matstrick saw a yellow-clothed shoulder rise from a bush.

He laid pistol across a forearm and took a breath and squeezed the trigger. The shoulder shook once and sank into the bushes and a man whined sharply.

"Underhill?" The colonel was estimating the distance back to the infantry positions. Maybe Underhill could make it, somehow. The infantry would be safe for a while at least. "Hop in the jeep and—"

The clap of a shot was a whiplash in their ears. Underhill's head snapped to his shoulder and he slid to his face and stayed there, arms outthrust and fingers curled. A wisp of smoke slid away on the rainy breeze.

Mastrick's chin was in the dirt. Without lifting it he could see the puncture in Underhill's helmet, could see the chipped walkie-talkie in the sodden mulberry leaves.

The colonel pushed out a hand on creeping fingers and gripped the radio and drew it carefully to him. He risked a look backward, down the length of his outstretched body; and he knew in that instant that he had gained the final heritage of soldiering: to shoot and get shot at, to draw blood and bleed. To stand and deliver and receive in kind. Everything else is parades and music and flags.

Two bandoleered figures were nearing the jeep, one on each side. Their coppery skins were clear to Mastrick. One said something to the other and the colonel could see the man's stunted brown teeth.

"Easy Fox Dog." He kept his voice to a whisper. "Over." He was not regretful that he had come up this far. He was not glad but neither was he regretful. It would do the young men good. Maybe—who knows?—it would save his son's life somehow, even though that son was far away in Frankfort going about his lawful occasions.

"Phillips?" The mine layers were slipping around the crest in a huge circle, hand-signalling to each other. "Tell your radio sergeant to get a shave before Mac sees him . . . Now listen, Phillips."

A single rifle shot was loud in the silence and the bullet cracked through Mastrick's canteen and he felt the warm water soak into his denims.

—Good-night, Sally . . . Wind the clock, will you?—

Mastrick's pencil was on the coordinates for the crest. "X210.3—Y95.6." The colonel took a short breath and released it. "As ready."

A menacing whisper began, high overhead. The whisper became a whistle and the whistle a roar.

Tight-lipped, Mastrick looked at his watch—4:10.

The roar swelled to a howl and the howl became deafening thunder and the crest disintegrated in a whirling hell that mushroomed upward and fell slowly back to the smoking earth.

First Lieutenant Yeager took his time about settling E Company along the crumpled crest where the shattered mulberries were. He thought the Reds might be in hill-defilade someplace, because twice he had passed what had been Americans on the upslope. And there was a broken wheel up there, the kind you see on a jeep. Its tire was mostly melted.

He checked the time. "Five after five, Sergeant. Looks like we have space to work in, for a while. One platoon either end of the slope, headquarters here. One platoon down below. And send me the weapons section."

The sergeant crabbed away on all fours, gesturing ahead of him.

Captain Phillips took the message from division himself. The radio sergeant was shaving and the crews were swabbing the guns and Phillips, for a moment, had nothing to do. "Remain in position . . . Roger . . . Over . . . Out."

He played idly with his ring, twisting it this way and that. He thought of the gorge up there and what a big thimble it was, really; and he wondered why no more wounded were trekking back south.

The radio sergeant straightened from a canvas bucket and towelled his jaws with an undershirt. "Wonder where they are, Captain."

"They don't answer, Sergeant."

The sergeant pondered that, then snapped the undershirt out, flapped it a few times and hung it on a rammer staff to dry. "Division says we stay here, huh?"

Captain Phillips took his hand from his ring and reached for a cigarette. "For a while anyway," he said. "The head of the valley's secured."

Men who die in Arctic cold do not normally succumb to low temperatures but to scurvy, disease or starvation. The human body, well nourished, can withstand incredible cold. A surveying party, 200 miles north of Prince Albert, Sask., calmly survived a prolonged blizzard bringing 60 below inland off Hudson's Bay—and further, through the almost inconceivable cold of 78 below zero.

—From the files of "Ask Adventure."

Albert Richard Wetjen was born in London and went to sea at the age of 13. He was shipwrecked twice on his first voyage. After serving in the British Army in World War I, he migrated to Canada in 1920 and then to the U.S.A., where he began the writing career which was to bring him fame as a master of sea narrative. He continued to wander about the world, from time to time—his subsequent adventures including such episodes as a voyage around South America as a deckhand. He traveled thousands of miles in the loneliest sections of Australia and wrote a series of short stories about the Australian Mounted Police for the Saturday Evening Post. *The O. Henry Award Committee gave him a special prize for the best short story of 1926, naming his "Command" in* Sea Stories. *His first book, "Captains All," appeared in 1924. There followed, among others, "Way for a Sailor"—"Fiddler's Green" and "In the Wake of the Shark."*

Damned Beachcomber

by
ALBERT RICHARD WETJEN

CAPTAIN BEAUGARD was thoroughly disgusted. He looked at the cynical, unshaven young man in dirty whites, leaning against a palm and smoking a cigarette. He looked at Brenner, the trader, perspiring over all his three chins and scowling darkly. And lastly he looked at the barkentine *Cynthia,* anchored out in the aching blue of the Pacific beyond the white thunder of reefs, and nearly a mile from the beach.

"What in hell will I do with him?" he demanded. "I've got a full crew. And anyway, why load me up with drunken beachcombers?"

"The name is Carson, Aubrey Carson," Brenner explained, fanning himself with his sun-helmet and waving at the young man against the

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palm. "Get him out of here, that's all I care."

"Don't mind my feelings," said Aubrey Carson politely. "The discussion interests me. I feel like a barrel of pork put up for sale. And no buyers, it seems."

"You shut up!" roared Captain Beaugard. He glared at Brenner again. "Who in hell left him here?"

"Jennings of the *Flying Bird*. The idiot had a notion he wanted to see the Islands and bought a passage. Been on a long bust in Sydney, I gather. Jennings loaded fifty cases of Scotch for him, and the maniac kept half the crew drunk from Brisbane to the Solomons. Jennings would have stood for it at that, I guess, but he found out Carson's money was about gone so he took what was left and dumped him here. On me! I don't want him. I've fed him for three weeks and he's been stealing my gin. So you get him out!"

"Why, Mr. Brenner," Carson admonished, "surely my company and conversation were worth a meal or two and a drink occasionally."

"I said shut up!" roared Captain Beaugard again. "Why I should dirty my decks with you is more than I can gather. No, Brenner, I don't want him."

"I haven't got the plague," murmured Carson. "And I'm considered quite amusing at times."

Brenner scowled at him.

"Too damned amusing!" He faced the fuming captain and his voice grew hard. "I ship a thousand tons of copra a year, Beaugard. Enough to ask a favor. I could always change ships, of course."

Captain Beaugard choked. He was a big man, and impatient. Broad and black-bearded and hard. He was not used to dictation . . . but a thousand tons of copra!

"If you put it that way," he said bitterly, "I'll take him off your hands. I'll break his damned neck. I'll make him wish he'd never been born."

"I was afraid of that," Carson sighed. "And really, Captain, you mustn't bear a grudge. This is Brenner's idea, not mine. I'd like to stay."

"Get down to my boat," gritted the captain. "Or do I have to kick you down?"

"No, I can walk," observed the young man, and he wandered to the water's edge where the longboat waited. They pulled out to the barkentine and the captain ordered Carson aft while he gave some instructions to the mate.

"It looks," Carson reflected, "as if I'm in for it."

He needed a drink. He needed a drink badly. But there was no prospect of him getting one and he winced at the thought of what he must suffer before the craving passed. He lighted his last cigarette, his hands shaking so badly he could hardly hold the match, and then he became aware that a girl was watching him.

"Oh, pardon me," he said. "The name's Carson."

"You're a remarkable specimen," she said coldly. "When did you last

take the trouble to wash yourself?"

Carson's vision was a bit unsteady but he gathered a pleasing impression of violet eyes and close-cropped brown hair the wind was lifting and ruffling, and instinct caused him to remove his battered sun-helmet.

"Wash?" he said vaguely. "Oh, a week or so ago. I've been extremely busy."

"Drinking," she agreed dryly. "You look disgusting and smell worse."

"Naturally," Carson explained. "Brenner confiscated my baggage to pay for what he pleasantly called food. You must excuse me, Miss—er—"

"Miss Beaugard, to be exact," she said. Her calm eyes ran slowly over his fine height, from his dirty shoes to his uncut hair and bristle of dark beard, and she made a grimace of distaste and disturbed him not at all.

"An educated man from your accent," she said. "Well, there are a lot like you in the Islands. Some of you are just plain no good. The rest of you run into one tough break, then fold up and quit. What was it this time? Gambling or women?"

That got him. Even she could see that. He went quite white and his mouth tightened. Something of his easy, half-bantering air departed from him and he stared at her narrow-eyed.

"If it would interest you," he said stiffly, "it was a woman."

She shrugged, resting her slim brown hands on the rail and glancing at the receding loom of the island.

"She showed good judgment when she threw you over then," she observed. "The *Cynthia* might make a man of you but you'll quit at the first opportunity. Your kind always does."

"Does it?" he said, white-lipped now. The irony and contempt of her tone stung him. He could not understand why. He thought he was beyond all that. "Does it!"

A great hand reached over his shoulder and jerked the cigarette away.

"Smoking on my poop deck!" roared Captain Beaugard. "Where the hell do you think you are?"

Carson turned and met an iron fist flush on the mouth so that he jarred back against the rail and then fell.

"And keep away from my daughter," the captain rasped. "You drunken swine."

"I spoke to him first," observed the girl, untruthfully.

Her father glared at her.

"You're supposed to be my supercargo. Haven't you got anything to do besides talking to a damned beachcomber? Get up!"

He kicked Carson viciously and Carson got up, wiping blood from his lips with a shaking hand.

"I wouldn't do that again," he said quietly. "It isn't at all necessary."

"You wouldn't do—?" Captain Beaugard choked and swung from the hip. Carson dropped to the scuppers, clawed to his hands and knees and then came up fighting. And he was in no condition for fighting after two

years of steady drinking and lack of exercise. There was an ugly minute on the *Cynthia's* poop and Carson was in the scuppers again, neatly stunned and bleeding generously. Captain Beaugard faced forward and roared for his mate.

"Mr. Glisson! Put this ape to work. A spell of chipping cables might do to start. The rust won't hurt him." He swung back to Carson. "Come below after supper and I'll sign you as passage worker to Singapore to make things legal. Dollar a month and you're not worth it. I'll get even with Brenner for this."

He strode away and Helen Beaugard surveyed the battered wreck in the scuppers with dispassionate interest. She had sailed with her father too long to be disturbed by a little man-handling.

"You'd better make the best of it," she advised. "He can do a lot worse when he extends himself."

Carson weaved to his feet and peered at her out of one rapidly closing eye. His voice was hoarse and tight with a bleak anger.

"It seems to be a sweet little family all around," he managed. "But you can tell him from me I'll tear his face off if it's the last thing I do!"

He stumbled forward then with the big mate jabbing his shoulder for speed, and Helen Beaugard looked after him, her eyes a little thoughtful, a furrow between her fine brows and her lower lip caught between her teeth. She had a hunch.

"I don't think you need have beaten up Carson," she said to her father a short time later. "He doesn't know the ropes and he wasn't protesting any."

Her father looked at her and growled.

"What the devil do you care? Does 'em good to be handled. He'll quit at the first port, anyway. They always do."

"I'll make a bet," she told him crisply. "A new dress to a case of Scotch."

"What's the bet?"

"That Carson doesn't quit at the first port."

"Bah!" snapped her father. "You're on, and you're crazy. They always quit."

"Carson won't," she assured him. "He's got a little job to do before he leaves the *Cynthia*."

"What sort of job?"

"You'll discover that," she observed, "when he tears your face off."

And that was so funny it kept Captain Beaugard in a good humor for the rest of the day.

The following week was for Aubrey Carson quite the most terrible period in his life. Every sinew and fiber of his alcohol-poisoned body screamed and protested and craved for relief. He could not eat. His head was a dull, aching bell. His limbs shook with ague and he was covered with unnatural sweats. Once he even went so far, when the torment became unbearable, as to strain the alcohol from a can of stolen shellac

and find a temporary oblivion with the aid of that vicious liquor. He was violently ill afterward.

To add to his peculiar misery there were the implacable two mates, the bosun, and a hard-case forecastle of fifteen men who despised him as a landsman and a failure, and they made him the butt of the ship. He was given all the filthy jobs. Jerked from his bunk at ungodly hours to make coffee, bring water or wash clothes for anyone who chose to command him. And in spite of his somewhat impressive size he was too sick to protest. There were times when he thought he was going to die, and other times when he was afraid he wasn't. One thing alone kept him going at first, and that was a steady and increasing hatred for Captain Beaugard, such a hatred that it finally became an obsession.

He might not have reached this condition had the captain let him alone. He might have allowed the bitter memory of that unnecessary thrashing the first day on board to sink into oblivion. Such had been his habit with other memories and troubles during the past two years. But he had no liquor to help him now, and Captain Beaugard himself kept the memory green. He seemed to take a curious and personal interest in driving Aubrey Carson nearly insane, and so marked was it that even Mr. Glisson, the mate, who rarely seemed to notice anything, began to wonder.

"You certainly don't like that beachcomber," he observed one day. "I guess he thinks he's in hell."

"I've got nothing against him." Captain Beaugard snapped. "Not a damned thing, except when I think of Brenner making me take him. But he's got to quit at the first port."

"Well, you can always fire him," the mate pointed out. "That is, if you don't want him around."

"No, I can't fire him," the captain said. "He's got to quit of his own accord."

"Of his own accord?" demanded the mate, scratching his head. "I don't understand."

"Well, you wouldn't," growled the captain. "But there's a case of Scotch involved. So give him hell." And Mr. Glisson dutifully thought up innumerable unpleasant jobs and gave Carson hell.

It was some days before Helen Beaugard became aware of all this, but when she did she was openly mutinous.

"You're not playing fair," she told her father angrily. "I didn't expect you to run Carson off the ship. He's got to have a chance, keep normal watches the same as the other men, and do the same work. You're finding work for him we've never had done on the *Cynthia* before, and he's kept on deck half of his watch below."

"All's fair in love and war," quoted the captain with a complacent grin. "A bet's a bet. Carson'll be so damned glad to get off this ship he'll start swimming before we anchor."

"All right!" snapped his daughter. "Two can play that game. You do what you can to drive him off and I'll

do whatever I can to keep him on."

"Wait a minute! Wait a minute," Captain Beaugard said uneasily. He knew his daughter and he'd made bets with her before. "Just what's on your mind?"

"That," she said, "is my business. As you say, a bet's a bet."

Captain Beaugard took off his peaked cap and scratched his head.

Aubrey Carson, kneeling over and scraping pitch from the seams of a scorching deck beneath a brassy tropic sun, was suddenly conscious of a scant but grateful shadow falling upon him. He sighed and looked up. Such a shadow was usually the boatswain or the mate coming to see why he wasn't working faster. But this time it was Helen Beaugard.

"Well," he managed, with a trace of the old banter. "Would you care to join me?"

"Not at all; that's a very messy job," she said, smiling and cool in a white shirt and waist, with a floppy-brimmed straw hat shading her face. "I just wanted to ask you how you were getting along."

"Remarkably well," he assured her, straightening to his feet with a groan and looking down at her. His mouth was mocking but his eyes were like flint, and clear for the first time in months. "I am living like a hog with fifteen other hogs, and with three or four super-hogs driving us all. It's a very fascinating experience."

She nodded and surveyed him frankly. The liquor had already sweated out of him, the bloat of it turned to firmer muscle. He would, she thought, in another week or so, be in first class condition. And he was a big man, with powerful shoulders. She thought of her father and laughed a little.

"You weren't so very much above a hog when you first came on board," she reminded him severely. "Several years of liquor-swilling has a distinct savor of the trough."

"Your language, dear lady, is as charming as your father's idea of justice," he said drily. "And now if you will excuse me—" He started to kneel on the blistered deck again but she caught his arm.

"We don't have to be so unpleasant to each other, do we?" she inquired. "I don't mean everything I say. And I think I can understand how it is a man can go to pieces over something, some misfortune, over a woman. It's weak, perhaps. But human. Forgive me. I'm sure you will eventually make good."

His eyes did not soften but a flicker of puzzlement came into them and she sensed the bitterness that filled him.

"Is this an uplift lecture?" he inquired acidly. "I'm really not interested."

She flushed a little and bit her lip.

"Oh, don't be such a fool!" she snapped. "I want to help you. You are, or were, a gentleman. I think you will be again." She looked at his growth of beard and at his matted hair. "I suppose you are still without simple necessities?"

He smiled then.

"My fellow hogs refuse to loan me even a razor. It seems I look funnier as I am."

She held out a small bundle and he took it involuntarily.

"I imagined as much," she said. "So I brought a few things along. Captain Beaugard is opening the slop-chest tonight and you can apply for clothes. As a passage worker you'll have to pay cash for them but I think you'll find sufficient in the package."

He stared at her, his jaw dropping. For once in his life he was incapable of speech.

"But why, why—" He was genuinely astonished.

"My reason wouldn't interest you," she observed serenely. "But it's a matter of a new dress." And she left him before he could gather any speech at all. On the poop deck she cornered Mr. Glisson the mate.

"Mr. Glisson," she said. "I've decided to have my room cleaned out and painted over. You might send a man aft first thing in the morning."

"What's the matter with the steward?" inquired the mate sourly. "He's supposed to attend to the cabins."

"The man I want," said Helen Beaugard firmly, "is Carson. You'll see to it, won't you?"

"I—" started the mate and then stopped. When Helen Beaugard's violet eyes took on just that look there was no use in arguing, and she reminded one very strongly of her father. So Mr. Glisson closed his mouth and nodded. He mentioned the matter to Captain Beaugard later on and the captain swore.

"I knew it!" he snapped. "I knew it! But I suppose I've got to give her a break."

It was a distinctly uneasy and somewhat suspicious Aubrey Carson who presented himself in the main cabin at eight o'clock the following morning. Captain Beaugard was on the poop with both mates, and the steward was in the galley helping the cook. So Helen Beaugard was alone to survey her handiwork with satisfaction and even some surprise. Carson was a different man in a clean cotton singlet and duck pants. The growth of beard gone she saw a finely-drawn lean face, not unhandsome, and the rough but efficient cutting of his hair had brought to clearness the outlines of a well-shaped head.

"Quite an improvement," she observed. He was uncomfortable and she rather enjoyed the fact. She had always been slightly annoyed by his usual cynicism and assurance. "I take it you are feeling much better."

"I feel less like an inmate of a menagerie," he agreed drily. "But may I inquire how I am to repay you for the money you advanced?"

"Twenty dollars, wasn't it?" she said. "Ah, yes. Well, you can repay me from your wages."

His eyes smoldered.

"At a dollar a month," he observed acidly, "you will have to wait for a considerable time."

"Well," she shrugged, "you can

always run away from the ship. I'll just put it down as a bad debt."

Her eyes, faintly mocking, met his and a flush ran up slowly from his throat.

"I—I have not yet gone so far as to accept money from a woman," he managed icily. "I shall pay you!" He took his eyes from hers with an effort and looked brusquely around. "Well, what do I have to do?"

"Oh, yes. We must get to work," she agreed. "First off we'll transfer my things to a spare cabin. And then you can clean this place out."

He said nothing after that but worked in silence, transferring trunks and packages at her crisp direction, in a sort of grim, tight fury that made his every movement a savage one, as if he would like to tear to pieces whatever he held. Captain Beaugard looked in on them once, scowling, but he said nothing, and when his daughter made a mocking grimace at him he stamped away with a muffled oath and left them alone again.

When the eight bells, noon, went, Carson straightened and tightened his belt.

"This is my watch below," he reminded her. "Shall I return at four?"

"You're on day work, not on watches, until you're finished here," she said crisply. "Come back as soon as you've eaten."

He looked at her and hesitated, on the verge of rebellion, and with a sudden impulse she crossed the cabin and closed the door.

"I've an idea what you're thinking," she said steadily. "Forget it. I'm not trying to make a fool of you. You've got something in you that shouldn't be allowed to rot. The fact you've recovered some pride shows that. Hating my father and me won't help you. It only makes things worse for you. I know you've had a hard time on the *Cynthia*, harder even than it should have been. I insisted on having you for this job to give you something of a square break. Life may be a mess so far as you're concerned, but give it a chance and be a good sport."

He was still and silent for a long moment, staring at her, and a little muscle began to twitch in his throat.

She turned, a little hesitantly, to open the door.

"What you just said, about giving life a chance and all that, means a lot to me. It's the first time anyone's had any faith in me. So I'm glad. Yes, glad the other—she turned me down and married. If she hadn't I would never have known there was such a ship as the *Cynthia*." His voice dropped until she could hardly hear him. "Or anyone like you."

She looked at him then with sudden new interest, as if she had never really seen him before. Her violet eyes widened and her warm lips parted to show a hint of pearly teeth. He was not mocking now, not smiling and amused. He was very grave, deeply moved, and with a touch of wistfulness in his voice. She felt disturbed, and then as she met his eyes a queer tingling came to her and all unbidden something passed be-

tween them far deeper than words. The warm blood crept to her face.

"I shall be back," he promised and was gone. She remained as she was for some time, thinking wildly, half-ashamed, half-exultant. A wave of maternal solicitude for him came over her too. She must stand with him, he needed her.

After a while she went somewhat shakily into the main cabin where Captain Beaugard and the mate were seated at the food-laden table. Something in his daughter's face drew the captain's irritable attention.

"You're a pretty smart young lady, eh?" he snapped. "Giving him a soft job and getting him cleaned and dressed up. Well, it won't work. You can have him until your room's done and then I'll take charge again. And this time he'll know what trouble really is."

She looked at him, her eyes misty but unafraid.

"We reach Tobangas, the next port, in a week or so," she said. "You still think he'll quit there?"

"I'll make him quit," promised the captain. "I'll make him quit if it's the last thing I do. I can use that Scotch."

Helen Beaugard laughed as at some inward joke, and she leaned across the table to smooth her father's cheek.

"You're sure," she said. "You're so very sure. Well, I'll double the bet!"

When Carson returned aft later there was a curious strained tension between them, but different from the one they had endured that morning. There was a kind of subdued understanding and happiness in it, and Helen found herself humming gaily. She noticed Carson's face in the full light from the porthole after a while and she gave an exclamation. His lips were split and one eye was puffed.

"Have you been fighting?" she demanded.

He laughed.

"It was nothing much. Just a little trouble in the foc'sle."

Explanation came not long afterwards when Captain Beaugard clattered down the companion from the poop. He glared into the cabin where the two were busily at work and temper crackled in his voice.

"What in hell do you mean, beating up Sanders?" he roared at Carson. "One of my best men. He's got two cracked ribs and a broken jaw. Be laid up for a week or so. I've a good mind to tar you down, you drunken ape. If there's any fighting to be done on this ship I'll do it myself. Is that clear? And while Sanders is laid up you can do his work as well as your own."

Carson straightened and faced the irate captain.

"Do you want Miss Beaugard's name dirtied by a lot of foc'sle hogs?" he said quietly. The captain was rigid for a moment and dangerous lights flickered in his eyes.

"Was that what the trouble was about?"

"I thought I implied as much," said Carson drily.

Captain Beaugard rubbed his beard and his scowl darkened.

"Well, keep your damned hands to yourself," he growled at last. "Sanders is worth six of you so far as the ship's concerned."

He went back on deck and Helen looked at Carson, who had reddened.

"So you were fighting for me," she said gently. "I'm sorry it was necessary."

He shrugged and attempted a laugh.

"Well, you know how men are. Hardly Sanders' fault. They saw you speaking to me on the foredeck yesterday and they know I'm aft here helping you now. Bound to be talk."

"I'm very grateful," she said. "If there is anything I can do—"

"You've done enough," he said shortly. "Only—" He hesitated and looked at her.

"Only what?"

He was definitely embarrassed then.

"Only what?" she insisted.

"If I could see you sometime and talk. I know it's a lot to ask . . . my being what I still am. But—" He could not finish and bent furiously to work again. She considered him for a long moment her lower lip between her teeth, and she felt a strange weakness inside her.

"I—I sometimes go midships for a walk," she said faintly. "After dark."

On the poop above, Captain Beaugard was speaking to Mr. Glisson and he was both irritated and mystified.

"Him licking Sanders is what gets me," the captain said. "Why, damn it, Sanders is tough. What does he want to let a blasted gin-soaked beachcomber take him to the cleaners for?"

"You seem to forget Carson's had over three weeks to get the liquor sweated out of him," said the mate drily. "And maybe you haven't noticed his shoulders."

"Bah!" snapped the captain. "I could smear him in a minute with one hand and a foot tied."

The mate coughed.

"The bosun was telling me," he observed, "that somehow or the other after the fight the men got it out of Carson that in his college days he'd been amateur heavyweight champion of New South Wales."

The captain blew his nose with unnecessary vigor.

"Kid stuff!" he exploded. "Amateur boxer! What use is that in a rough-house? I like men salty and fighting with all hands and feet."

"Well, Sanders is no lady in his fights," commented the mate. Captain Beaugard blew his nose again.

"Sanders must have been crippled or sick or drunk or something this time. I'll fire him at Singapore."

He felt that Carson was getting under his skin more than ever. It annoyed him. It very nearly infuriated him. First he had to ship the man against his will and under what amounted to compulsion. That was enough to raise his bile. Then he had to go and make a bet with his daughter, and he had more than a

suspicion he was going to lose. Now, to cap it all, that damned beachcomber and lily-fingered college drunk had gone and put his best able seaman in his bunk for a week. It didn't make sense. Captain Beaugard felt that for his own self-respect and the honor of the *Cynthia* he would himself have to tar Carson down again.

It was after four bells, ten o'clock that night, when Helen Beaugard joined the shadowy figure leaning on the port bulkwarks just abaft the mainmast. She had not come without certain hesitations. She had all the pride of the poop deck, of a captain's daughter, and she considered the men of the forecastle so far beneath her that any social contact with them was unthinkable. And now here she was meeting on the main deck a man who was not even a good seaman, who was nothing at all, a beachcomber picked up from an obscure island, without prospects or future. Yet she had had to come. She had known that from the first, when she had implied the meeting. Her blood was pounding hard, her head doing strange things.

"Oh," she said, uncertainly. "So you're here."

He turned and gazed at her in the dim starlight.

"It was very good of you to come," he said gently. "You can't know what it means to me."

"Perhaps," she whispered through dry lips. "Perhaps I do."

Neither of them knew quite how the time passed after that. There were long silences when they both stared at the sky or at the glinting phosphorescence in the water bubbling alongside. There were conversations broken off abruptly and for no apparent reason, and there were longer ones when much was made plain. He told her of his life, wasted and futile, all but wrecked. Of the woman he had lost and the gay times he had had in Sydney. All unbidden she too found herself recounting the years since she had left school to sail with her father, the ports she had seen, the men who had made love to her. But they hardly heard each other for all that, speaking as it were from the surface while beneath strong currents swept and hammered. Eight bells, midnight, went then and they started.

"So late?" she said. "I must be going."

"I suppose so," he agreed regretfully. He hesitated and then took her hand.

"Thank you again," he said huskily. "It's been wonderful. The most wonderful night of my life. I, Helen—"

"Yes," she whispered in involuntary acquiescence. She found herself tight against him then, his lips warm on hers, and then he was gone, running forward with a half-choked and utterly unintelligible cry. She rested against the bulwarks for a moment, and then she made a slow way back to her own room. She hardly knew what had happened, except that everything was changed. She had never believed that everything could change so.

Captain Beaugard was thoroughly disgusted. The fussy, evil-smelling tug had just finished pushing the *Cynthia* alongside the rickety wharf at the little island port of Tobangas. The lines were out; native stevedores were already padding about the docks. And almost to a man the forecastle was dressing ready to go ashore. But there stood that damned Carson, leaning on the bulwarks and gazing at the white-walled town with obviously no intent to quit.

His clothes, new a week or so before, were torn and work-stained now. He looked tired, even drained. He was distinctly thinner and Captain Beaugard knew he must be sick for need of sleep. Yet there he stood, staring dreamily at the town and his thoughts apparently miles away. Just as his thoughts had been miles away all during that last harassing week. It made Captain Beaugard sick.

If ever a man had been hazed Aubrey Carson had. Not even on the hell ships of the clipper times had any one man been driven so. What he had been compelled to undergo during the first weeks of his being on board the barkentine had been paradise compared to the last few days. With Captain Beaugard it had gone far beyond the point of merely winning a bet. He definitely hated Carson. The man baffled him. He should have cracked and he hadn't cracked. He should have been a whimpering wreck by the time Tobangas was reached and he was nothing of the sort. Captain Beaugard felt there was some sort of a vital issue involved. He must be losing his grip. First Brenner had forced the man on him; then he had boasted he would make the man quit at the first port; and now there the man was with no intention of quitting.

Everything that could be done had been done. He had Carson dragged from his bunk at all odd hours for the slimmest of reasons or for no reason at all. He kept him on deck when his watch went below. He abused him within hearing of all. He called him every name he could lay his tongue to. He had him down in the stifling fetor of the bilges, scooping out the filth there. He had had him oiling down spars in the heat of tropic noons. He kept him on his knees for hours, holystoning already spotless decks, and then deliberately soiled the planking so the work would have to be done over again. It was so bad that even the forecastle murmured. It wasn't human, let alone just. But Carson did not seem to mind. He did not even seem to know what it was all about. He seemed to live in a dream, from which he emerged with a start only at long intervals and to vaguely answer questions. Yes, it baffled Captain Beaugard and he did not like to be baffled, certainly not by damned beachcombers and on his own ship.

What was more curious, he thought, was that his daughter had made no further protests about his unreasonable attitude. She had not mentioned the bet again, nor even

asked for Carson to do other and lighter work for her. She too seemed strangely abstract these times. It was as if the two of them lived entirely apart from the ship and from all physical pleasures or discomforts. And yet so far as the captain knew they never looked at each other or spoke to each other. He had had a faint suspicion that his daughter might have caused Carson to fall for her, to make certain he remained on the *Cynthia* beyond the first port of call, but if she had Carson certainly acted like no man in love he'd ever known. He cursed and bit into a fresh cigar.

"Hey, you!" he shouted. He had to shout three times before Carson turned and came aft. And that did not improve the captain's temper.

"You drunken ape," he began unpleasantly. "Isn't this where you get off? Haven't you had enough?"

"Enough?" said Carson. He looked at the captain as if he did not understand the language. "Enough?"

"Yes, enough, damn you!" the captain exploded. "Get off my ship. If you won't go of your own free will I'll fire you!"

Carson looked disturbed for the first time.

"You couldn't do that," he observed.

"Oh, I couldn't. I suppose because I signed you at a dollar a month you think I'll be glad to keep a cheap man. Well, I'm not. You're the worst paid man on board here and at that you're an expense."

Carson eyed him queerly. He had done the work of at least any three other men and he did not comprehend this unreasoning danger. He started to protest; and then he saw Helen Beaugard emerge from the main cabin scuttle and he forgot the captain entirely.

"I said get out!" the captain roared.

He became aware that his daughter was near him then and he twisted the cigar in his mouth and growled aside.

"I'll concede the bet. But I'm kicking him off anyway. I don't like him and he's caused more trouble than enough already."

"You can't put him ashore here," said the girl calmly.

"Why can't I?" The captain gathered fresh rage. "Are you telling me what I can or can't do too?"

"He signed for a passage to Singapore if you remember," she observed. "And since he's done his work and obeyed orders you've no grounds for discharging him."

Captain Beaugard was struck dumb for a moment. And then he recovered.

"Look here," he began, and abruptly stopped. They were not paying the slightest attention to him. They were looking at each other with a gaze so intent it fascinated even the captain. It dawned on him that matters had gone beyond his control.

"You," he managed at last. "You've fallen for this drunken rat? A daughter of mine? A dollar a month beachcomber. The worst paid man on the ship. Why, damn you—" He took a stride that brought him flush against Carson.

"Get out!" he shouted. "Get out before I throw you on the dock." He said more. Mostly unprintable.

Carson shifted his gaze then and focused it. And he smiled, thinly, calmly and dangerously.

"I wouldn't use such language," he observed. "There's a lady present. And I think you mentioned I'm the worst paid man on board. You're wrong. You're quite wrong. I'm the best paid member of your crew."

"You mean what?" roared Captain Beaugard. He shot another look at his daughter and a ghastly suspicion seized him. "You mean you and Helen—" He choked and his face went purple. "The best paid? You mean—" He could not get out the words and his control snapped. He swung wide and Carson staggered back, a red mark on his cheek.

"I've been holding this for a long time," the captain grated, and without further words he bored in.

"Father!" Helen cried but no one heard her.

The two men were reeling across the poop, their breaths quick and hard, the clean smack of blows sickening the girl who had always thought fighting so natural before. She ran to get between them but it was over before she could. There was a sharp crack like a breaking stick and Captain Beaugard slumped to his knees, pitched forward and collapsed, half-unconscious. Carson stood back, smiling faintly and nursing his knuckles.

He looked across at Helen Beaugard, shiny-eyed and steady. He looked at the blue sky above; at the jungle beyond Tobangas; at the masts and spars of the *Cynthia;* at his sun-blackened arms, sinewy and strong; and lastly he looked at Captain Beaugard, who was clawing unsteadily to his feet.

"All wrong, Captain," he laughed. "The worst paid man on board, you said. No, the best paid. Paid in a lot of other things besides money. Like being able to knock you down. I couldn't have done it a month ago but I can do it now. I can lick you any time and in any place, and you know it. The best paid. That was what I meant!"

Captain Beaugard got himself erect at last and shook his head to clear it of the mists. Never in his life before had he been knocked off his feet and the shame sickened him. Yes, he was licked. There was power in that young man's fists and he himself was getting old. He felt it now. No sense denying the thing. The damned beachcomber could tear his face off any time and in any place. No need to experiment any further in regard to that.

He was still dizzy and shaken up from the one last blow. His rage and shame ebbed after a while, and because he was at heart a sailor and a man he made his concession. Perhaps the sight of his daughter standing beside Carson and with her arm about him, looking transfigured up into his face helped matters too.

"There used to be a rule in the old

times," he said slowly. "When a man could lick another he got his job. I can't give you mine, that's certain, but the second mate's quitting at Singapore. You're all right, Carson. You've come through. And you can soon learn the ropes."

"Father!" cried Helen. "Then you do understand! You know that Aubrey and I—"

Carson crossed the poop and held out his hand.

"That's fine of you, sir. You've hired a new second mate."

"And the pay?" said the captain maliciously.

"A dollar a month or nothing," Carson told him. "It doesn't matter. I'll still be the best paid man on board!"

Deepwater Dictionary

ABOVE-BOARD: We borrow this phrase from early day merchantmen, whose custom it was to parade the whole ship's company on deck when approaching another vessel. This showed honesty of purpose, because pirates hid most of their crew *below board* (under the bulwarks) until close enough to attack.

BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP: An expression today meaning uncomfortable circumstances. It originated at the time of wooden sailing ships. The seam next below the main wale was the longest and hardest to caulk, and was nicknamed "The Devil." In order to caulk it, one swung outboard on a bosun's chair, and was thus literally "between the Devil and the water."

IN THE DOG-HOUSE: It dates back to slave ship days. In order to pack aboard as many slaves as possible, they were herded even into the officers' quarters. The officers had to sleep in semi-cylindrical boxes on the poop-deck. Nicknamed "Dog-Houses," these boxes were most uncomfortable. This is where we get the idea of being in a tough spot when we say, "I'm in the dog-house."

PIPE DOWN: When we say "Pipe down," meaning "Be quiet," we borrow a leaf from the old bosun's book. When he blew "Lights Out" on his pipe (or whistle), the order implied that the men should quiet down and go to sleep.

POURING OIL ON TROUBLED WATERS: This term originated when whaling-ships, helping another in distress, poured oil on the sea to keep the waves from breaking, this making it safer for rescue boats.

TAKEN ABACK: This term meaning to be astonished or embarrassed, actually refers to the position of any square-rigged vessel, which, by reason of squalls or poor steering, has her sails blow backward against her masts.

TATTOO: Tattooing was first used by sailors as a means of identification in the days when family names meant little and few sailors or their "lights o' love" could read.

—*"Traditions of the Deepwatermen," by C. W. Windas.*

Famous Military Corps

1: THE VARANGIAN GUARD

It was in the eighth century that the Norsemen burst out of what is now Sweden, Norway and Denmark and made their name a terror to all of Europe. Their Longships penetrated every sea, even reaching America about 1000 A.D. By the middle of the ninth century they had reached Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire.

There is very little general knowledge about this Eastern Empire founded by Constantine the Great in 330 A.D. Here was a realm that endured 1200 years, whose culture, wealth, and power far exceeded anything in Europe, yet today it is largely forgotten.

The Eastern Empire was almost constantly at war from the time of its founding to the date of its fall in 1453. The feudal levies of medieval Europe could not compare for a moment with the disciplined and regular troops of the Byzantines.

These troops were recruited from levies of the various nationalities that made up the Empire—Cappadocians, Cilicians, and Syrians made up most of the heavy cavalry; the Cataphracti. Some of the best infantry came from Isauria. Macedonia and Thessaly furnished both horse and foot.

It was into this fabulous realm that the Vikings sailed in their Longboats after exploring the Mediterranean Sea. They were welcomed with open arms by the Greeks, for the giant Norsemen were fighters such as they had never seen before.

The Norsemen were enrolled in a special body called the Varangian Guard, the name coming from the Scandinavian word "Varar" meaning sworn men bound by an oath in all undertakings. The Corps wore as a uniform a silver cuirass, and hanging from the shoulders an imitation bearskin made from a strong, shaggy silk, and a light helmet surmounted by a dragon. Their weapons were a light scimitar and the double battle-axe.

After the year 1000, when the migrating urge of the Scandinavian people had begun to lag, other Europeans were taken into the Corps, these being principally Saxons who had left England after the Norman Conquest.

The Varangians not only acted as a Palace Guard; they were sent wherever a strong force was needed and in an empire that seethed with intrigue, they were faithful to the Emperor on the throne.

The life of the Corps paralleled that of the Empire until the last remnants perished when Constantinople fell in 1453.

by HOWARD R. VOIGHT

". . . We hove to one afternoon on that awful coastline of jagged black rocks and glacier fields—Fredericksland they called it, the farthest south of any land on the map. No tree or bush or blade of grass ever growed there and the sun never shone. Just storm and shadow and sea and wind. It made a man feel as if he'd been wandering around dead for years. We all got to hating each other's guts—and then the penguins came, like a crowd of aldermen down to welcome us, chests out, pompous and solemn . . ." A strange and haunting tale with a new kind of hero—an Emperor penguin, the great flightless bird of the Antarctic.

EMP

by
PAUL
ANNIXTER

WELL THEN, I'll tell you about the Emp. I'll tell you the truth about him, all exceptin' how we originally come to be down in his God-forsaken end of the world, which'd have to be told by another man in some foreign clime where extradition is a lost hope. Only let's get the hell out of here and go in to the bar. Every time that damn dog comes snufflin' around it drives me nuts, after what he done. They let that mungol slobber 'round me one more time and I'll heave him overboard.

Well, there was we, me and the Crumb—Crummie Catlin, that was, my little old Welsh waddie I'm always tellin' about. Down there in lower Tasmania, like I say, in July, middle of July, and colder than a banker's smile, 'cause summer's bally winter down there at the butt of the Southern Ocean. If there's anything worse than snowballs coming down the wind in July, I don't know about it. And us without a decent coat between us, as I'm saying and hardly a sou in pewter in our pants, marooned among blinkin' foreigners—Limeys and red-necked "roos" from Queensland, Auckland, and the like—when along comes this blighter Klegg with his proposition.

Overhauled us in a pub, he did, on a stormy day, with a noggin of cheap grog under our ribs and ready to beg, mooch or muscle another noggin as a bulwark to windward, you might

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say. Sure, we took him up, and so would you, by God. I guess we'd of signed up with him for a thin flask of rum that day.

Klegg was a sealer, so he said—and it wasn't long after we'd shipped with him that we wished to hell he was, seamy a game as sealing is. No, it wasn't seal Klegg was after; it was a lot filthier game. Sea elephant. The *Albatross*, he called his old tub, a two-master with an auxiliary with its rings gone, that could drive her along at seven knots in fair weather, though there wasn't never any fair weather thereabouts. We found time to cuss the day we'd ever left solid ground. Mister, that *Albatross* was old as the ark and wasn't never meant to put out in. She gurgled with the dead sea water in her hold and she stank like a fox's gut, her decks rank with oil, blubber and dried blood. And strike me straight if I ever see such a crew. Eleven of 'em all told, all the cross-bred, ingrowed whelps of fortune that ever broke a mother's heart.

We hove to one afternoon on a God-awful coastline of jagged black rocks, glacier fields and tallow-colored sand. Fredericksland, they called it, and the guy can sure have it. I'll tell you the kind of place it was, and I can't even feel them drinks we had: It was the furthest south of any land on any map, and no tree or bush or blade of grass had ever growed there. Everything there had a hell of a shape, even the rocks and skyline, if you get me. The sun never shone there. It would show up a few minutes at midday, away to the north, like it swum in mustard; then the clouds would clamp over it like a bun over a hot dog, and the rest was mostly storm and shadow. It made a man feel like he'd been wanderin' around there dead for years, tryin' to find rest; like he'd been goin' nuts for a long time and hadn't been able to make the grade. That gives you some idea of it. A bit of the idea . . .

The sea and wind thereabouts was like they'd been married too long. They bellowed at each other night and day. The waves would come roarin' in from one direction and the wind would clip the tops off 'em and send 'em whistlin' in the opposite direction. But the sea birds liked it. All day long they swung low over the shore, yelpin' and mewin' pitiful, "like blessed kittens with ribbons on 'em," as Crummie said. Murres and gulls and kittiwakes and albatrosses with six-foot wings. They'll tell you a raven or an owl is the bird of ill omen, but don't you believe it. Ask any sailing man. All you got to do is see one of them, dirty brown like a piece of storm cloud, and looking older than God, sail low over you, turning his head to look, like he knew the end was near.

But nuts with all that. I ain't doing this to tell you about that damn country, which all I want is to forget I ever seen it. It's what we found down there, as you'll see when I get around to it.

Old Klegg, he put us ashore there,

eleven of us and the mate's dog, heavin' some duffle bags after us, some jerked pemmican, tack and other truck, and a hundred heavy bilabong clubs with knots in 'em.

Shake a leg up among the rocks, says he, and keep an eye bloody well peeled for what he was payin' us for, 'cause times was stricken hard. He'd be back, he says, in two-three weeks, when there was something to come after, and that something better be more than us.

Yeah, you got the idea. We was to hang out there without no shelter but the rocks and a big strip of sail cloth in that awful weather, waitin' for sea elephants to come ashore, all for some rotten chuck and about three bob a day—less'n you paid for them drinks. By cripes, what men'll do at times! I tell you if there was some oil or pearls or valuable mineral truck at the gates of hell, there'd be someone like Klegg to throw a gang in there and bring it out in shifts. . . . Sure, I'll have another with you. Straight for mine.

Four, five days went by, the bunch of us huddled out of the wind and waitin', and nothing showed up. We had to catch our sleep in threes and fours any time we could—there wasn't cover enough to go round. We'd catch two-three hours each and then be kicked awake to make room for some other bloke. We put in most of our time battlin' back and forth, workin' the hell out of our systems that way. Some bird had brought a bottle of rum along, and we broke the bottle first off fighting over it, and that started things popping. We all got to hatin' each other's guts, and not a man but tried to kill some other punk in the outfit with his bare hands. And then there was four-five of them tried to kill Sloper, old Klegg's mate, and there was one whoppin' free-for-all when the rest of us went in to save him, and I guess it was too bad we done it, too.

One morning we heard some almighty booming and roaring from somewhere down the shore, like six or eight of them big white-maned combers had hit the beach in too big a hurry and was tearing hell out of each other. And next second there was Sloper, stompin' on us kickin' our backsides.

"Come out of it, you lugs," he yells. "Every man grab a couple of clubs. They're here!"

We shagged him down the shore at a dead run, sneaked along a line of rock that run down pretty near to the water and there we saw them. Sea elephant—a herd of about sixty of them, a hundred yards up the shore. They looked like a bunch of the biggest slugs you ever seen in any nightmare, laying there in rows on the sand, shakin' like bags of jelly when they moved. The biggest bulls weighed up to four thousand pounds, the cows around half of that. They had round, empty lookin' pans, a lot like walrus, with bleached whiskers hangin' down like these rube comedians you see in music halls, and eyes like an old Schnauzer dog.

Right on top of their beezers was the dangedest lookin' bulges, big

around as footballs and lookin' like they'd been pumped full of air. Them bulges was six or seven foot from the ground too, brother, and it looked like plain suicide tacklin' giants like that with nothin' but a club, but Sloper talks to us behind the rocks.

"All you got to do is hit 'em hard just back of them bulges," says he, "where the necks begin. Everybody yell like hell and head 'em off from the water; they'll start inland and then we got 'em."

Well, we rushed 'em, whoopin' and yellin' like mad tikes, drivin' 'em up the shore like so many cattle. Sloper, he showed us how to jump in the air and come down with our clubs with a whang on the back of their heads. One whack would do the trick if you got 'em just right, and down they'd go, quiverin' like they'd run onto a live wire. The more we downed, the nuttier we got over seein' 'em fall. They roared till the ground shook, but they was helpless against us—only you had to watch out sharp for them big blunt teeth of theirs. Two-three times I see a big bull take up a mouthful of stones, some as big as good eggs, and crack 'em up and swallow 'em, same as I or you'd eat nuts, Jeepers!

We all got seein' red, I guess, and went leapin' from one critter to another till the beach was strewed with 'em. I mistrust if more than six or eight of that herd got away. It was fair awful; but later it was worse still —days of working in blood and fat while we salvaged the hides and oil.

We was right in the middle of all that stink and mulch when some puck yells out sudden, "Holy cripes and the apostles, look a' that!" We did and there was the dangedest sight a man ever looked at. A crowd of penguins, about thirty all told, was arching down from the rocks higher up the shore, single-footin' it same as men. They looked like a crowd of aldermen come down to welcome us, with black hats and long top coats on, and white eyeglasses, their chests slung out almighty pompous and important.

About twenty feet off they all stopped and give us a couple of bows, all quick and solemn like Japanese admirals. Then they come on and stopped and done it over again. I never see anything friendlier than the way they done it. The lot of us stood there amazed, 'cause some of them birds was around three feet high and there was somethin' genteel and human about it all that fair caught you in your tracks.

They marched up within six foot of us, bowin' once more; then the biggest penguin out in front, turns to the right, puttin' out his short flipper like a drum major puts out his arm, and the bunch of 'em swung right in close formation and marched off twenty foot and slewed round to watch us.

Well, I guess there wasn't a man among us but seen hisself like he really looked there, all smeared with blood and about as low as white men get. There was something so almighty fine about them little suckers com-

pared to us, we was all a mite shamed and sore, like you'll get when you're caught in a trick so dirty that a decent man hasn't words for it. I still can't get over the low feeling they give to me . . .

"Crimus!" says somebody. "I never knew them birds got big as that."

"Them's Emperor penguins," says Sloper. "Now bend your backs, you bums."

"Emperors," says the Crumb. "And that's the old Emp hisself," pointin' to the big one. Yes, it was Crummie that put a name to him.

Just then Sloper's dog come running up from down the shore. Right at the penguins he comes blustering and swearing, and they're just as friendly to him as to us, spreading out in a half circle and bowing right regal from the hips, you might say. The cur jumps in and tries for a throat or two, when the Crumb runs out and grabs him by the neck and throws him ten foot.

"You keep that mungol off 'em or I'll brain him," yells the Crumb, and he stands there breathin' black and savage, with a big chunk of slag in his hand. Man, but my partner was raw red fightin' cock at times!

For a minute things looked black enough, with Sloper standing nuzzling a big club in his paw for a better grip. But there was them penguins lined up hard by, holdin' nothin' again the dog or us, still bowin' and beamin', though some of 'em has blood smeared on their white chests where the dog has ripped 'em. Jeepers, you can see it, can't you? Them things wasn't only birds; they was the only decent things we'd seen in that whole godolphin country, includin' ourselves. Yessir, special and particular, includin' every stinkin' one of us. The boys all seen that. An' I guess Sloper seen it. He'd been saved once from slaughter, see, and it wasn't half likely he would be again.

So he give in, and after that the mungol was tied up every time them penguins come down to pay us a call, which they done regular twice a day, like a delegation of politicians in full evenin' dress might come payin' their respects to some almighty important foreigners stoppin' in their country.

We figured at first they was maybe mortal lonesome, for it was a place where a man might of cried at sight of a flea to bear him company, and treated him like a long lost brother. But we seen quick enough the thing run a sight deeper than that. Them little suckers was born bluebloods from hat to coat-tails, as the Crumb points out to us, cause it was always just the same when some of our crowd went over to their camp.

They had sentinels always watchin' and when they seen us comin' they'd call out all hands and the whole of 'em would come forward, solemn as be damned, bowin' and holdin' up them short arms of theirs like they was brung up to shake hands, but would let it pass. And they'd show us around the place. What I mean, *show* us around, walkin' right along side of us and tickled to death we'd

dropped in. And by God, it was great for us havin' another camp like that hard by.

Lonesome? Hell. Them birds had just come up from spendin' six months down near the South Pole, and their place was like a heavy traffic zone to them. It was pairing time for them and they'd come to nest along that shore, because of the nice mild weather we was havin' there! Only them birds don't know nothing about buildin' nests. They're too dang human for that sort of thing. All they do is scoop out a hollow among the rocks and lay their eggs in that.

Say, I'll tell you a thing or two about 'em that'd make a man go get his eyes examined; 'cause I and Crummie and them associated continuous the two months we was there—all the time we wasn't skinnin' out them sea elephants or crackin' 'em on the conk. Them birds can't fly. They'd walked—three-four hundred miles—over snow and ice country to get to this nestin' place. Get it? Walked all the way on them waddlin', fat, stumpy legs of theirs no longer than a cigarette. They'd et nothing all that time, mind you, and wouldn't till pairing time was over. And they done that every year at the same time. Every day we'd see a new bunch of them comin' in to make camp somewhere nearby, all walkin', in long files as far as you could see, like a bunch of hefty gents with their hands in their coat pockets. And then the pairin' time begun and that's one of the reasons I'm telling all this.

Ever seen a pair of English bulldogs matched in a pit? Ever spent an evening watchin' cock fights? You think you know what guts is then, but I tell you you've not seen anything. Your chickens and your bulldogs will battle two-three hours, maybe half a day, but penguins, Billy, will battle for weeks. Yessir, weeks. Them birds have cities and laws, same as men, and there's good ones and bad ones, thieves and heels and regular guys among 'em, like there is among us. And that's the day we come to see the Emp for what he was. Every penguin I ever seen is a darb. But the Emp wasn't only a penguin. There never was another penguin like him.

Like I said, them birds kept comin' in and comin' in from every direction till there was thousands of 'em all along the shore. The rocks inland was covered with 'em, and still they kept comin'. Each new gang that come in was under one or two big cocks. They'd sort of stake out a claim alongside the others and settle down and camp on it. It was a heap like it was up in Dawson City, Alaska, back in the gold days.

Pretty soon the whole place was a nut house for fair. It was a lot like a seal rookery in pairin' time, only there was fine rules and technicalities to the game with these little suckers. They never ganged up, for instance, and mobbed one of the fighters. While a couple of rivals would be fightin' it out, hammer and tongs, the other cock birds would line up on the side like they was watchin' it all for fair play, and not till one of

the battlers went under—and what I mean *under,* with eyes jabbed out and a busted neck, too gone to even move—would one of the rivals on the side-lines take up the fight. I tell you, Billy, the country that ever takes and uses one of them birds for their national emblem will be the king country of the whole blinkin' world. They'll never be whipped.

Mostly them scraps would start over the stone-gatherin', which is part of a penguin's courtin' tactics. When a cock-bird gets a real mash on some hen penguin he'll come up bowin' clean to the ground, and lay a nice round stone or two in front of her, like you'd bring a bouquet to your best gal. If the hen didn't touch it, that was givin' him the air, but if she picked it up she was as good as goaled at the altar and that stone become the first one in the buildin' of their nest. The two of 'em would sashay down to the beach real honey-like to gather more stones.

But always there was some lugs waitin' to make their nests easy by liftin' the stones already gathered by the honest citizens and tax-payers, them being too honest and straight-shootin' to know why it took 'em so many days to build a nest. Yessir, like in the human family, there was the easy marks that didn't even suspect that half of the world was heels and Chinamen. See what I mean? And them heels was so almighty slick about it that even when they was caught red-handed they'd pull off a act, fumblin' with the stone they'd stole, makin' believe they'd slung it down there to rest a minute. And them square-shooters, like the Emp, they'd let it pass, bein' too honest to even believe in crime when they seen it perpicated right in front of 'em.

Times there'd be a bit of a mix-up when two-three sheiks would lay their stones down in front of the same flapper penguin. She'd maybe fumble with both stones and then there'd be hell poppin' for fair. Like the way the Emp got into his first big fight. That was a battle the like of which nobody ever seen before or since, and that's a fact.

Three or four of us just happened onto that affair, catchin' it all right from the start. It was Crummie that recognized our man first off, by a black sploch he had on one side of his white waistcoat just above the right leg. We'd likely have passed right on, 'cause them fights was a pretty common sight by now, except for the Crumb.

"Look at that there," says he, grabbing by arm. "It's the Emp she wants. That was his stone she picked up."

"We'd ought to drive that other blighter off," says I.

"Hold hard," says Crummie. "The Emp can bloomin' well take care of his-self."

Well sir, they was at it hammer and tongs before a feller could move. The two of 'em squared off and slung their chests up again each other and begun spearin' with their beaks and whangin' each other with them short flippers

of theirs. Them blows was steady and fast as machine-gun fire. They put all they had into it and you'd never of thought any critters their size or twice their size could of stood up under it. The feathers flew and blood begun runnin' down their white chests. We figured the thing would soon be over, but a couple hours went by and they was still at it, the two of 'em so close matched there wasn't hardly no edge at all on either side.

There's only one end to that kind of scrape, 'cause death hisself is the referee. We seen that pretty quick. Two, three times both battlers pitched clean over on their chins and laid there, plumb slug-nutty and too groggy to move. Then they'd stagger up and slam into it again, till finally, along in the second hour, the Emp sort of wound hisself up and let loose with a rattle of hay-makers that sent the other man for the daisies. For a spell we thought the Emp was done too. He looked like he's steam-rolled for fair, layin' there on his chest with his bill stretched out in the sand. But after a long wait his head comes up slow and jerky, he flicks the blood out of his face and gets to his feet.

"By Gawd, the sucker don't quit even when he's dead," says Ned Ollin.

Well, you'd a thought the thing would end there, wouldn't you? But that was nothin' but a start. Slow and staggery the Emp moves over to where that flapper penguin is still sittin' on her tail and bows to her again. And the other two cock penguins, that has only been waitin' on the sidelines to see the set of the breeze, standin' there like a couple bums on a wintry day with their hands stuck deep in their long coat pockets—they come to life now. One of 'em comes waddlin' for'ard and drops another stone in front of the hen, and like it was a signal there's another battle on before you could drop a hat. The Emp, he rallied at sight of that stone and slung hisself in to do the whole thing over again.

You'd never a' thought he'd been down for the count only five minutes before. He showed up real champ blood by puttin' his back up again a rock and leadin' the other man out. It was one of the prettiest cover-ups I ever see. The rock kep' him from fallin', see, while he gets back his strength. Half the time that other battler was sluggin' the rock and his own chin. Fact. By the time dark come on, by jeepers, the Emp was leadin' out every now and again with the dirtiest kind of uppercuts and not even staggerin' in his footwork!

Why squander all these words over a ruckus between birds, you say? That's what I'm trying to put over. Them penguins comin' had changed every one of us, see? We'd all quit battlin' among ourselves, for one thing. Watchin' them the way we did had took up the slack in our outfit, all the corruption that naturally come of just being in that rotten country, understand? You can hoot if you like, but you wouldn't if you'd been there . . .

Well, we hung there watchin' till

it was so dark you couldn't rightly tell one battler from the other. Then the lot of us thrown our heads together in a quorum, 'cause it didn't seem right leavin' a friend like that up again them awful odds. There was that other rival still sittin' there, his bill pointed into the wind like a dead stogie, waitin' his turn accordin' to the rules of the game. Most of us was for breakin' up the battle right there to save the Emp, but Crummie would have none of it. The Emp, he says, would uncork a surprise package and make his comeback. And danged if he wasn't right.

Maybe you won't believe this, but sometime durin' the night the Emp he got his second wind and massacreed that second rival like he had the first. When we showed up in the morning there he lay stiff and dead as be damned, and there was the Emp and that other rival—leaning into it, hell for glory, except for about half the time when the two of 'em was flat on their chins. Fancy that. After near twenty-four hours of heart-breakin' battle our bird was takin' the number of still another rival—the third, mind you—and what I mean, *takin'* it.

No, sir, the Emp wasn't no more blow-flied than the other man. Both of 'em had their eyes near closed and clotted with blood, and it looked like the end was close, except for a funny thing now and again when the two would get up for another go. Each time the Emp he made believe he was too goose-egged to even cover up, and the other battler would barge into the opening. But that opening wasn't his; it was the Emp's. He was just waitin' the chance to clinch to let loose with that meat-ax bill of his. And by Crimus, in the end he whittled that man down in his own blood, like he had the other two—him that had been ready to pat with a spade by the look of things when the second fight begun. It was the gamest comeback I ever hope to see, and every man of us cut loose with a holler that lifted the sea birds off the rocks in clouds.

But what was the pay-off for that great-hearted battle? The answer to that is so doggone much like the way life is back in the rucks of the righteous, I'm ashamed to tell it. There comes the Emp crawlin' back for a third time to make his bow and take the reward that's due him, fallin' flat every foot or two and gettin' up again, and what does he find? The hen penguin wasn't even lookin' at him now. She'd been growin' restless with all that waitin'—she wasn't only a flapper in the first place, mind—and hadn't never been through a thing like that.

There she was sidlin' off among the rocks and makin' come-along signals to a big loafer of a cock penguin that had snuk up from somewheres durin' the fight—one of them unmarried murderers that never put up no battle for a wife, but go prowlin' around other camps watchin' for lost baby-penguins and young deserted wives. There he stood, the big bruiser, fresh and untired and waitin' for our man to fall down again so he could chop him into hamburger. That was

too much for any of us. We couldn't stand by and watch our man play stooge to a butcher. One of the boys drove them two traitors off and we collected the Emp and took him back to camp to save him. For two weeks the lot of us looked after him like he'd been mascot of our ball team or somethin'. We'd all gone soft, if you like, but the Emp and us had been through a thing you can't explain.

He was a lot farther gone than any of us had figured. One eye was blind and one of his feet was broke so he couldn't do more than limp about. We couldn't leave him there to be mobbed by the gulls; he was real people to us. So Crummie, he took him along when we left, but I guess he shouldn't never of done it.

Sure, he liked us; and he never forgot he was a gent; he never failed to pull off his bow when I or Crummie come up. But it was plain to see that every mile we made to northward was tearin' the heart out of him. He stood on the deck there, like you seen him, two whole days, lookin' away into the south through the film that was growin' over his eyes. Pinin' for that godolphin country where the snow'd soon be three foot deep, mind, and blowin' blizzards for the rest of the year.

Like Crummie said, that lad was a born battler; he had to battle even the weather. It was pining that really killed him, and that dog—that mungol of Sloper's happenin' to be aboard—only cut it short a day or two.

Love Letter of a Shellback

by HAROLD WILLARD GLEASON

Dear Sailor's Star:
We're bound for Singapore,
Loggin' two knots an' makin' heavy weather.
You'd ought to hear our Newfie bosun snore!
(I hope this cussed packet hangs together!)
Today our cook got three sheets in the wind
On flavorin's an' carved the steward's gizzard
To scrimshaw . . . (He's a heller when he's ginned,
But when he's dry, the chow he makes is wizard!)
We've bugs aboard as big as any rat
An' social, too—they crawl acrost our faces.
Tonight a squall blowed off the Old Man's hat;
He grabbed for it an' bust his Sunday braces.
Our foc'sle's bilgy, an' I get the blame.
Right now the ship's in stays . . .
Hope you're the same . . .

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Jasper and the Criminal

by
JIM KJELGAARD

Jasper could not bring himself to condemn the cornered thief to a fate far worse than death.

I DO NOT see how anybody in Blowdown County can even begin to think that my cousin Jasper is lazy. He just has ailments which keep him on a bed of pain whenever he is not hunting and fishing. If he was lazy, would he have lain for three days and three nights in front of a cave on Gander Mountain, waiting for a criminal to surrender?

It was on a day early in July that my cousin started his manhunt. Annie, Jasper's wife, and I were cutting hay, and before he started for Crawdad Creek to fish, Jasper came out to see how we were doing. He almost cried.

"My little girl!"—he thinks so much of Annie!—"I do not like to see you working so hard. If I could, believe me, I would help!"

"That's all right, Jasper," Annie said. "Gosman and I know that you cannot work, don't we, Gosman?"

"Yes," I said. "I would not have you working, Jasper. After all, what I do for you is little enough compared to what you have done for me. You give me a home, and all I have to do is work eight or ten hours a day on your farm. And in only four years, as soon as I am sixteen, you are going to start paying me wages."

"A dollar a week," Jasper said. Then he sort of choked up. "It is wonderful to have such a loyal family and I will go now."

Annie and I watched him hobble painfully towards the creek, and we went back to cutting hay. There were thunderheads in the sky and we had to hurry before the rain spoiled

our hay, but of course we could not ask Jasper to help.

We expected that Jasper would fish all day, and come home at night too tired to do anything except eat six or eight pork chops and a dish of potatoes and tumble into bed, but hardly two hours had gone by when we saw him running across the field. I let the team stand. Annie dropped her fork and we cut across the field to meet Jasper; with all his miseries it is not good for him to run like that and we knew something was the matter.

"I cannot stop now," said Jasper, running towards the house. "Come along, Gosman, I need you."

He beat us to the house, and when we got there Jasper was loading his squirrel gun. He put an extra handful of cartridges in his pocket and hung a hunting knife at his belt.

"Oh dear!" said Annie. "Whatever is the matter?"

"Annie," Jasper said, "there is a desperate criminal loose in Blowdown County."

Annie wrung her hands. "Oh dear! What shall we do now?"

"Do not fear," Jasper said. "I am on the trail and I will round him up."

"Who is he and what did he do, Jasper?" I asked.

"It is Joab Carles," said Jasper, "and he stole a shoat from Arnie Mullins. At least he thought he was stealing a shoat, but he got a young boar that Arnie just bought."

"Don't you go, Jasper," Annie said. "Let the constable catch him."

"It is my bounden duty to go," said Jasper. "Such an act is a stain upon our whole county. This criminal must be brought to justice!"

"Please," said Annie. "With all your miseries and ailments you should not be going."

"If I did not," said Jasper, "I would be shirking my duty as a citizen. Besides, Arnie has offered a twenty dollar reward and the constable's already looking. I must hurry. Come, Gosman."

Jasper did not run up Gander Mountain, but he walked so fast that it made me pant to keep up with him.

"Where are we going, Jasper?" I asked.

"To the cave just under the peak," Jasper told me.

"Do you think Joab will be in there?"

"I know he will," my cousin said. "He and I hid there many a time when the revenooers got after us about the still . . . Uh—that is, he hid there."

We came to the copse of aspens that shield the mouth of the cave, and I knew even before we looked that somebody was hiding in it. I could smell smoke, and pork cooking.

Jasper whispered, "Now, Gosman, you must act like a man. Go right up to the mouth of the cave and tell Joab to come out with his hands up."

"But . . . S'pose he does?"

"I am here," said Jasper. "I will handle the matter from that time on."

Of course I knew that Jasper could

handle it. I never should have doubted, so I went up to the mouth of the cave and hollered, "Come out, Joab, with your hands up!"

"Who's there?" Joab hollered right back.

"My cousin Jasper. He has come to take you to jail."

"Jasper! Take me to jail?"

"Yes."

"Tell that———" and Joab said a lot of bad words which I will not repeat, "to come in and get me!"

"It is no use, Joab," Jasper said. "You cannot get away and my conscience will not permit you to get away."

"You and your conscience!" Joab said. "Come in and get me!"

Jasper smiled sadly at me and said, "Gosman, it seems he is going to be stubborn."

Staying to watch the cave, Jasper sent me home for some things he wanted. It took Annie and me quite a little while to get Jasper's bed apart, and the mattress and bed loaded onto the wagon. Of course we had to have blankets and a tarpaulin just in case it rained; Jasper is so delicate that he probably just couldn't stand getting rain-wet. Then I had to drive the team to the top of Gander Mountain, and by that time the hot meal Annie had packed for Jasper was cold. Jasper told me about it while I was setting his bed up.

"Gosman, this meal is cold."

"I'm sorry, Jasper," I said. "I got here as fast as I could."

"Well, everyone must endure hardships, Gosman. Still you really should have brought Annie along to take the team back. A man with my miseries shouldn't stay out of bed too long."

I hurried home with the team, and almost ran back to the cave because I was worried about my poor cousin. As soon as I got there he lay down on the bed and pulled the covers over him.

"You had best get some firewood, Gosman," he said, "and keep a fire all night in case Joab tries to escape. Wake me if he does."

"Yes, Jasper."

I gathered a great pile of firewood, and built a fire right in front of the cave. I sat there all night, but Joab did not try to escape. There was no reason at all to wake my poor, ailing cousin, and he did not sit up until the sun was two hours high.

"Did he try to escape?" Jasper asked me.

"No, Jasper."

"Run down and get us some breakfast," Jasper said. "Then come back and sleep for half an hour before I'll need the bed again. In spite of my miseries, I will watch while you sleep."

For three days and three nights Jasper kept that criminal penned in the cave. Believe me, I was mighty proud of my cousin! Then, on the fourth day, I knew that at last Joab was coming out. He yelled, "Hey out there!"

"Yes?"

"I'm givin' up," said Joab.

"Jasper!" I hollered. "He's coming out!"

Quick as a flash my cousin leaped up and threw the blankets off. He grabbed up his squirrel gun.

"Have your hands up!" he ordered sharply.

"Don't worry," said Joab.

He came out of the cave with his hands up, and he looked disgustedly at my cousin.

"It was a toss-up," he said, "whether I'd rather look at you or what's left of a dead pig. The pig almost won."

"It will do you no good to insult me," said Jasper.

"You ought to be real proud of yourself," Joab said. "Real almighty proud. After the things we've done together, you'd take me in for swipin' a pig."

"When one becomes a criminal," Jasper said, "one must expect to pay the penalties."

"Well," Joab shrugged, "it was a good eatin' pig and the most I'll get is thirty days at hard labor."

"You'll get what?" Jasper gasped.

"You heard me, thirty days at hard labor."

"Oh my God!" Jasper's face was chalk-white. "I—I couldn't do that to any man! Run along, Joab . . . Quick! Go now!"

After Joab had run along, Jasper turned to me and said, "The fiends!" He looked as if he'd seen a ghost.

The Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) regiment of the British Army is one of the many regiments of that service with an exceedingly interesting history. In 1729 a number of independent military companies were formed in Scotland to maintain the peace in the Highlands. These were formed into a regiment in 1740, originally known as the 43rd Regiment of Foot, the number being subsequently changed to 42nd. The regiment wears the typical Highland uniform and its name of "The Black Watch" is derived from the color of its tartan.

The regiment got its baptism of fire at the battle of Fontenoy in 1745 when a French writer declared that "the Highland furies rushed in upon us with more violence than ever did sea driven by tempest." The Black Watch next fought against the French in America and also served here in the Revolution. It was in Egypt in 1800, in the Peninsular campaign under Wellington and also at Waterloo. It fought in the Crimea, in India, in the war against the Boers in South Africa, and in the World Wars, always with distinction. The regiment has two battalions and its recruiting district comprises the counties of Fife, Forfar and Perth in Scotland. Its depot is at Perth.

—From the files of "Ask Adventure."

This account of the incredible career of Tracy Richardson, the last great "soldier of fortune," was written by a man who knew him personally for many years. Richardson, who fought under six flags in a dozen wars and was wounded sixteen times, was the only man ever to call the bluff of Pancho Villa—or to capture a city single-handed.

Soldier of Fortune

by
ARCH
WHITEHOUSE

THE COLONEL riding ahead of the long dusty column was barely nineteen. He wore a khaki shirt, a pair of misfit breeches and a wide-brimmed felt hat. His mount was a flop-eared mule, a suitable charger for his sweat-stained saddle; but his bandolier bristled with ammunition, for a great battle loomed ahead.

In his wake trailed 150 miles of bitter jungle warfare, a highway of horror marked by butchered bodies, the stench of blood and the anguish of hundreds left to die because there was no succor—not even a spare bullet to halt their sufferings.

Weeks before this pitiful company had marched from the sun-gilded port of Bluefields in Nicaragua, goaded on by the honorable intention of overthrowing a hateful dictator. That was issue enough for this ragged army of insurgents but it would not have been good enough for Tracy Richardson. The impulse of righteousness alone actuated his trigger finger.

This was 1908 and somewhere in the mists of this political history and intrigue stalked the ghosts of two shackled Americans. The traditional offer of a blindfold, the contemptuous refusal and the all-conclusive flash of a rusty saber. Issue enough for Tracy Richardson.

Today that international crime is as vague as their memory. Few can recall two adventurers listed as Cannon and Gross, a pip-squeak furor in the newspapers or the diplomatic protest. It was up to General Luis Mena and his handful of native stalwarts to regain Nicaraguan honor and rid the banana republic of this offender.

Into this bewildered gathering wan-

A Fact Story

dered a solemn-eyed, reticent Ozark mountaineer who could handle any weapon General Mena could produce. In his belt he carried a .22 caliber pistol, already notched with a quartet of victory Vees, and a fighting knife ground from an old file. There were no questions asked. His skill was enough and Richardson became General Mena's machine gun officer.

Managua was 150 miles away on the west shore of Lake Nicaragua and the route festered with Federal ambush posts. General Mena's force had started down the Escodido River in jungle launches—fully two hundred strong. But disaster struck almost immediately. At Muelle Bay they were ambushed as they disembarked and only Richardson and his machine gun saved them. Actually it was the first time the youngster had been under mass fire but he reacted like a young savage.

The wharf and slatternly warehouses spewed Federal death from every slit and angle of cover but Richardson led a storm party through the hail and nailed the opposition down with snarling bursts of machine gun fire.

The Feds who had opened with the advantage of cover were unable to withstand the initial onslaught. They retreated to upper floors but Richardson, cradling the heavy weapon in his arms, stood spraddle-legged and punched penetrating fire up through the floors in a manner that some thirty years later became accepted Commando tactics in European house-to-house fighting.

When his belts were exhausted he led his men through the bales and crates armed only with his knife and mopped up. When it was over the Muelle Bay wharf was a shambles. It was impossible to tell the Federal troops from the ambushed insurgents, so battered and hacked were those who had fallen in the massed slaughter.

Richardson strode out of it without a scratch but when General Mena saw what his uprising had started he wept and was ready to return. His little force had won its first engagement but there were few left to bury the dead. But the Ozark boy wasn't through. When night came he went out to a nearby gold mine and recruited more than a hundred natives with his beguiling tongue and the cold penetrating fire of his righteousness.

The next morning Mena's ragged forces started west again over a trail just wide enough for a pack mule. Experienced machete men went ahead hacking their way through the steaming jungle. It rained incessantly and with every mile new ambuscades blocked their way and piled up the dead. Mile after mile Richardson advanced and cleared the trail, pouring frugal bursts into the Federal mantraps to nail them down until he could crawl in from their rear and butcher them with his savage knife-work.

At La Libertad they stumbled into fierce resistance again and snipers picked them off by the dozen. Still Richardson rallied them and selected a new storm section that massacred Zelaya's forces; retrieved their weap-

ons and added a few scant rounds to their dwindling ammunition supply.

By the time Mena's forces started the descent toward Lake Nicaragua, Richardson had recruited more willing natives and when they marched into Remates at the head of the lake they had a force six times the size that had started from Bluefields.

Once the final march on Managua began the resistance was negligible. Now and then a few desultory shots rang out but nothing could stop this amazing force sparked by a reticent savage from Missouri.

In the meantime Richardson had been promoted to a colonel. A blistering sun blazed down and the heat and dust rising in a blinding cloud was insufferable. Assuming the prerogative of his rank Tracy decided to move up ahead of the column and breathe in the clear.

The next thing Richardson knew he had ridden into the city of Managua alone!

A frenzied patrol of Federal soldiers surrounded him, threatening and shouting their demands. Two came to his knee and tried to yank him from his mount. Without a change of expression Tracy kicked one in the throat and sent him sprawling. The other he shot between the eyes with his .22 caliber Ozark rattlesnake. That restored calm and order immediately.

This was a position that called for action and an ultimatum.

"*Amigos!* I am an official emissary from the commander of the revolution," he announced in his most impressive tones. "I seek an immediate audience with your general. Take me to him—at once!"

The colossal bluff worked. The Federal soldiers formed a cavalry escort and led Tracy through the streets of Managua to the headquarters of Zelaya's army.

A fierce bewhiskered figure greeted him at the gates of the citadel. He was all boots, teeth, epaulets and dragged a sabre large enough to decapitate an ox. Before the general could swallow his first gulp of surprise Tracy announced: "Sir! General Luis Mena has sent me to give you one last chance for your life."

Old Teeth and Whiskers subdued another gulp.

"Managua is surrounded at this very minute," Richardson added without a change of expression. "We outnumber you two to one!"

The commander of the Managua garrison considered the situation for several seconds. Then he unbuckled his sword-belt. The great weapon clattered to the ground. The garrison had surrendered!

When General Mena ambled in half an hour later Tracy Richardson was in full charge and sat scratching his initials on the scabbard of the general's sword. Single-handed he had captured a city and brought victory to a revolution.

Mexico next attracted Richardson when revolution flamed and brought the downfall of Diaz in 1911. Madero who succeeded to the office was a weak

man and his administration marked by colossal blunders. More uprising resulted and in 1912 President Taft had to prohibit the shipment of arms to Madero's opponents. Later Victoriana Huerta headed an uprising that toppled Madero and initiated the ill-feeling between the Mexican government and the United States.

Richardson had served as a colonel in Diaz's army, followed his heart through the Huerta uprising and finally tossed in his lot with Carranza who eventually became the arch-enemy of Pancho Villa. At that time Villa was a notorious figure and the news and pictorial agencies sought photographs and news features on this fabulous character.

Foreign correspondents were worth about a nickel a dozen in bandit territory and scores of them stood on the International line with yearning in their eyes but quaking fear in their hearts. Richardson who feared neither man nor beast agreed to get pictures of the great Pancho Villa for the Acme News Service.

It was no sinecure but Tracy rigged up a small camera inside his shirt and made his way into a Mexican prison compound where Villa was supposed to be securely jailed. Tracy caught Pancho sitting behind a table stacked high with banknotes, calmly paying off his men. The situation was incongruous, to say the least, but Richardson had the pictures—several of them—and sneaked back across the line. They were published all over the world and Tracy picked up a nice piece of change for his effort. Later Villa screamed his fat head off, declared the pictures had been faked and added that if he ever got his hands on *Señor* Richardson . . .

Some time later Tracy went back, trapped the blustering Villa in a *cantina* and slapped him smartly on the whiskers. Villa reached for his famous pearl-handled .45s but Richardson was too quick for him. Out came the .22 Ozark rattlesnake and it was plunged deep into Villa's bulging belly.

"Listen, you blow-hard bandit," Tracy snapped. "You owe me an apology concerning those pictures. You'll make it public—here and now—or I'll let so much air into you you'll float."

Pancho apologized.

After this Tracy served as a scout for General Frederick Funston and took active part in the seizure of Vera Cruz until the bugles rang out over Europe.

Richardson signed out, leaving the Mexican problem to General Funston. World War I broke out on August 1, 1914 and by August 15th Tracy was in Canada and had enlisted in the All-American 97th Battalion. This idealistic group of fighting Yanks eventually provided replacements for the renowned Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.

The Princess Patricia's went into action almost immediately and on April 22, 1915 they were entrenched on the Ypres front when the first German poison gas attack was launched. A French Zouave division taking the initial attack, was driven

back and the Germans rushed through and captured a British heavy battery. With their left flank wide open the Canadians held on and then miraculously counterattacked; charged on through and re-captured their British comrades. The guns, however, had been destroyed.

By now the Germans had a bone in their teeth and they lunged once more at the Princess Patricia's front line. It was wicked fighting with bayonet and jam-tin bombs, the wounded screaming amid the barbed wire entanglements. On May 4th during a bayonet charge Tracy went down with a severe leg wound and had to be evacuated. According to the records eight men of that original regiment walked out of that engagement. The rest were killed, wounded or captured.

The remnants of the original regiment were incorporated into units of the Third Canadian Division and when Tracy went back to France he found himself once more in the deadly Ypres sector. During a trench raid Tracy received his second wound—a splinter from a potato-masher bomb—and back to England he went again.

By now, like many more, Tracy had his eyes in the sky. Trench warfare lost its lure and aviation was attracting the boldest from the muck and desolation of Flanders.

Since he was an experienced machine gunner Tracy found little difficulty in wangling a transfer to the Royal Naval Air Service, the sea arm of British aviation. He took his training at Calshot but in those days any candidate for pilot's wings had to first put in fifty hours as a gunner-observer over the enemy area. On his first patrol while flying aboard an old Sopwith two-seater he came upon two German Brandenburg seaplanes doing a reconnaissance over the North Sea.

The old Sop had a fixed gun up front but after the first attack it quit cold and Tracy took over, ordering the pilot to get below the float jobs. After some maneuvering during which time the German gunners peppered them wickedly, Tracy finally put a burst into a Jerry gas tank and the seaplane exploded showering debris, spare parts and pontoons all over the Sop.

Tracy's pilot was one of those unbelievable British characters who observing one phenomenon presumes there is no reason why the said phenomenon should not occur again, so he promptly buzzed the battered Sop over to a position beneath Brandenburg No. 2 and sat awaiting the expected result.

Tracy obliged and once more they huddled beneath an aerial explosion that was several portions larger than the first. The Brandenburg detonated with a roar that almost stopped Big Ben in London. The burning wreckage descended again and once more they had to claw their way through the flaming debris. They floundered back to their station with parts of an engine panel draped over the tail-assembly and the propeller hacked off to about half its diameter. How they got in is an aeronautical mystery and on the strength of that perform-

ance the R. N. A. S. officials decided Tracy was ready for pilot training.

By the time he had earned his British Navy wings the United States joined the Allied forces and Richardson immediately applied for a transfer to his own country's forces and wound up in charge of aerial gunnery training at Issoudun where he had to be content to sit out the war.

On his return from World War I the old urge for banana-republic adventure was irresistible and he went back to Mexico where he bossed a mining job. That blew up in his face and he tried a pint-sized revolution in Honduras. He shipped out of there and went to Alaska and back-tracked to Cuba, but the old soldier of fortune days could never be completely recaptured.

With the outbreak of World War II in 1939 Tracy tore off for Canada again and tried to revive the old All-American Battalion, but President Roosevelt appears to have had a quiet agreement with Mackenzie King, aimed to keep the United States neutral as long as possible and Tracy's plan died in the early snows that blanketed the Department of National Defense in Ottawa.

But Richardson would not be repulsed for long. He returned to New York and applied for an Army job. He was immediately commissioned a major and was put in charge of Plant and Factory Security. He was given an office in New York City and one of his first assistants was an Irish-born ex-cop, named O'Dwyer. The ex-cop went on to become a brigadier-general and eventually elected Mayor of New York.

It required a tough uncompromising man to handle Tracy's job. It was his duty to decide who and what plants deserved government contracts. It meant weeks of quiet investigation and checking to prevent sabotage and worthless munitions. And there were many political angles to battle. Finally, Tracy requested overseas duty and was assigned as commandant at an air base in Alaska.

After the war Tracy was appointed to a civil service job with the War Assets Administration, but by now he was suffering from a heart ailment and was crawling in and out of hospitals all over the country. His golden days of high adventure had come to an end.

Richardson died practically penniless on April 20, 1949.

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For many years prior to his recent death at the age of 49, Georges Surdez' unique position as the final literary authority on the French Foreign Legion (of which he was an honorary sergeant) was unchallenged. In person, he was a big man of rare charm and vitality, and a wonderful raconteur. He had traveled extensively in Europe and Africa as a foreign correspondent, and had been a long-time member of this magazine's Ask Adventure staff. In addition to the dozens of exciting yarns he contributed to Adventure, *his work appeared in* Collier's, *the* Saturday Evening Post, Esquire, Coronet *and numerous other publications.*

Affair of Honor

by
GEORGES SURDEZ

THEY WERE almost two hundred men in khaki, trotting slowly up a bare slope blasted by an ardent sun. Divided, they formed sections and combat groups, united they composed a company of the French Foreign Legion. From the crests came a continuous crackling of detonations, a fusillade that swelled furiously, sank into unexplained lulls.

From time to time, a silhouette would lift an arm, other silhouettes along the advancing line would repeat the gesture. The men stopped trotting, slid toward the ground in a single smooth surge. Then new sounds shook the air, the fierce, hammering discharges of automatic weapons. After some seconds, a first silhouette rose in full sight again, others followed, and the sweep of their arms ripped the soldiers from the earth, forced their cringing flesh erect, and they went on as if their muscular bodies were dragged forward by the spirit of discipline.

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"Allons-y, en avant, la légion!"

On the crest, his body stretched against the flank of a small boulder, a Riffi sniper rested on a folded black cloak. He was a regular, a marksman detailed to shoot down those conspicuous figures with the bits of gold braid on their sleeves. His whole being, from naked toes to shaven head, was tensed, rigid; all his life seemed to pour into his right eye, his right forefinger.

Four times, he had fired at one of the gesturing silhouettes, and four times he had missed.

He waited for a fifth chance.

Even before he squeezed the trigger, he knew that he had him. The tall European took a hasty, lunging stride, as his head jerked back. Then his knees folded under his weight and he was gone. The sniper showed his teeth once, in appreciation of work well done. Then his lean wrist flicked, there was an oily flash, the glitter of the brass shell from which death had struck, and his eyes sought another target.

That was all.

Yet his finger had tripped another trigger, released into motion forces held up for years. In slaying Lieutenant Valkenar, Second Company of Legion, he had necessitated, automatically, the appearance of a new officer. In those days many commissioned men were being weeded out, by death, by wounds, from the outside.

So that young Sub-Lieutenant d'Herviller, waiting for assignment at Meknes, received orders to report at once to the Legion battalion at the Jebel Timna.

Lieutenant Valkenar, slain by a Mauser slug, had been a good officer and very popular with his men. Senior-Sergeant Dortlinger replaced him in charge of the section.

Dortlinger was a veteran, thirty-four years old, a big sandy-haired noncom, courageous and matter-of-fact. He knew in advance that the replacement officer was young and inexperienced, and he dreaded his coming. The battalion as a whole was in poor condition, in any case, commanded by Captain Jarbon, filling the interim to the return of Major Ulysse Collin, convalescing of fever at Rabat. It was pulled out of the lines for a week's rest in camp.

D'Herviller reported on the first day.

He proved a surprise, even if he did not appear the ideal Legion officer. To start with, he called himself Herviller, had dropped the *d'* denoting nobility of family. His manner was stiff, distant, almost scornful. Dapper and handsome, a bare twenty-two, he faced seasoned combat-worn soldiers he was presumed to command—men just emerged from dangers, whose uniforms were in rags, whose boots, when they still had boots, were mended with strings and bits of purloined telephone wire—with calm confidence, with almost insolent ease.

The glance of his dark eyes was as direct and unyielding as a bayonet's lunge. He was tall and broad enough,

lithe and smooth of movement, and he knew how to wear a uniform. But Dortlinger noted soon that he appeared bored. His first speech to the assembled section was a masterpiece of willed banality, delivered in an utterly detached fashion.

"Glad to be among you—Duty—Discipline—your known achievements and courage guarantee—worthy of traditions—I'm certain we'll get along well together—Dismissed!"

The men broke ranks, almost inarticulate with indignation. They were Legionnaires, not conscripts, and as such entitled to silence rather than barracks-yard clichés.

"He's a cocky———!" was the final opinion.

There was no doubt of it. Herviller's behavior was a challenge. Dortlinger himself had been granted but a nod and quick clasp of the hand, without a compliment for the splendid condition of all weapons. Did not the fool understand that it was not easy to present him with good automatics after weeks of campaigning?

Consequently, the section celebrated the issue of new uniforms and boots, the next day, in true Legion style. The patrols, were still combing the traders' shacks for strays at four in the morning. Captain Jarbon, as was normal, sent for Herviller and bawled him out in military style. And in the morning the sub-lieutenant addressed the section once more.

Was he commanding schoolboys or men, he wanted to know? He was ready to grant, he stated, that after several months of active service they might relax somewhat. But had they not been taught the limit of their privileges?

He interrupted himself at this point, his glance fastened on one man: "You—what's your name again?"

"Tardon, Frantz, Lieutenant."

"Come out here." Herviller beckoned. The Legionnaire obeyed, showing off for the benefit of the others, not at all humiliated to be singled out. His big hands swung at his sides, for the section was not under arms. "What was that you were mumbling?"

"I'd rather not say, Lieutenant."

"I order you—or are you afraid to speak aloud?"

The man's chest swelled under three medals and one cross.

"I've never been much afraid, Lieutenant," he said. Then he added with a crafty smirk: "But I'm obeying orders, you know. I said—" and he pronounced the words clearly. They reflected nothing good on Herviller's birth, nor on his morals.

There was an instant of jubilation in the ranks. Then came a silence: Herviller, an officer, had struck a private publicly. And he had struck hard, for Tardon was picking himself up, automatically groping for the kepi knocked from his skull by the force of the punch.

Dortlinger came forward to prevent further trouble, but Herviller's shout halted him.

"Stay where you are! Legionnaire Tardon, get back into the ranks." The sub-lieutenant faced the section,

glaring. "I have infringed regulations, and you have your chance to get rid of me. That's all you wished, eh? Complain to my superior officially. But, privately, if there is one of you who wants the same, I shall be happy to oblige him before leaving!"

His eyes scanned the line of tanned faces. They considered him with interest. His aloofness was gone; he was angry, almost mad with sudden fury. He said he would fight any one of them, and decidedly meant it! He had just done something moreover, that all of them had reason to understand, struck first and thought later. Slowly, grins flashed here and there, until the whole line was smiling.

Herviller was safe from them, for he had placed himself in their power. It was some seconds before he understood that the crisis had passed.

"I've already spoken too much," he conceded. "Dismissed."

Legionnaire Tardon then walked up to him, mumbled an apology. Herviller smiled, for the first time since arriving, a young, cheerful smile. His large, well-kept hand rested on the private's shoulder.

"Sorry myself, old chap! Had to make you the goat, because you look as if a good sock wouldn't hurt you much."

Dortlinger walked back to camp with the officer.

"That was a long chance, Lieutenant. But it worked."

Herviller now was perspiring, nervous. He laughed.

"We're all here to take chances. By the way, Dortlinger, that is a fine section you turned over to me. Better than I dreamed of when I volunteered for Moroccan service."

Dortlinger repeated this compliment, as he probably was expected to. And when the battalion went into action again, seventy-two hours later, Herviller was a popular man. The men knew that he was green, that he was hearing bullets, real bullets seeking for him, for the first time. They knew what was going on inside of him, and were proud, with individual, personal pride, when he received the baptism of fire without flinching.

Captain Jarbon, who had not liked him before, nevertheless cited him—and the men in his section felt that they had been honored.

"He'll go a long way," they started to say. "When the major gets back with us, he'll be pushed along. Collin likes that sort—educated, young, with guts!"

Dortlinger, who now spoke with Herviller often, mentioned the major constantly: "He's a great fellow, you'll see, Lieutenant! A real Legionnaire."

"We already have one thing in common," Herviller announced. "The same first name, and a pretty odd one, too: Ulysse! Well, we'll try to please him when he gets back."

Having attracted attention to himself, Herviller was talked about. There were several men in the mobile group who had been at military school with him, and they told what they

knew. Nothing that is mentioned at a mess table remains secret; information is passed to the ranks and files by orderlies.

The first item was that Herviller had been nicknamed Josephine during his first semester in school. He was reputed a splendid fellow with a rotten temper. Little by little, other revelations of his past came out, for the grapevine gossip in the French Army operates constantly. Especially in the case of one who happened to be, as Herviller, a member of a fairly well known military family.

His father had been a captain of Hussars. Something of a rake and a gambler, a typical officer of light cavalry in the happy days before the War. He had ended tragically, killed by a former friend in duel, over a trifling difference of opinion. The mother had been shocked by his death; had become practically a recluse, retired in a country home, employing only women servants, bringing up Herviller from babyhood with three older sisters. When he had entered Louis Le Grand Lycée to prepare for military school, he had walked like a girl, and at first, in French composition, had often used the feminine gender for himself.

Probably because of the merciless kidding of his comrades, he had grown into a surly, combative fellow, one of the best athletes in his class, a superb fencer, a fine boxer and an excellent rider. Undoubtedly the unfortunate experience had given him that brittle, aloof manner, also his inclination to react in the most masculine fashion to the slightest word.

Having volunteered for colonial service, asked for the Legion, he did not relax, but sought to prove himself as valorous as anyone. In the next fortnight, he won a second citation, then a third. If he had been seeking to get himself killed, he could not have acted otherwise. Tireless physically, he volunteered first for anything demanded. Moreover, he was lucky and had a rare gift for doing the picturesque thing.

For instance: A Legionnaire was left wounded in the open, and Herviller left cover to bring him in. And although he had not known it when he started, the man was Tardon, whom he had struck! That made a little scene appealing to imagination, formed a complete anecdote which lost nothing in the telling.

"You want to take it easy," Captain Jarbon advised him. "At this rate, you won't live very long."

Herviller laughed, shrugged.

"Oh, Captain, I run little risk. I have something to do before I die, and it isn't done. So I am safe."

"Ah?" Jarbon paused questioningly. When no further explanation came, he touched the young man's shoulder. "Be careful, as much as you can. I've recommended you for promotion."

Herviller paid no attention to this good advice.

Three days later he led thirty men across open country, under fierce fire, to clear a battery of mountain artil-

lery attacked in a sunken trail. There was a fierce encounter, bayonets against knives—through which the sub-lieutenant moved armed only with a walking stick, which he used like a foil. He emerged with the top of his tunic hanging in shreds over his belt, his torso and shoulders streaked with superficial cuts.

Captain Jarbon sent for him. "You exaggerate, Herviller. I cannot mention you again so soon." He offered his hand. "Still, that was a nice job, and I'd like to do something for you."

Herviller grinned.

"You can, Captain—"

"All right. Let's hear what you wish."

"We're due for a big attack tomorrow or the day after, right? Well, one objective will be the minaret on hill six-hundred-and-four. I'd like to have my section assigned to the job. You know, do it with grenades instead of waiting for the thirty-five millimeter cannon to be brought up. Surprise and that sort of thing. I've read a lot about such stunts, and—"

Jarbon lifted his shoulders. "You know the objection to it—the chap in the lead is usually killed."

"I won't be, Captain."

Jarbon nodded. "I don't believe you will be, at that. It's a bit more risky to those engaged, but it does save time. I authorize you to ask for volunteers."

Herviller laughed.

"I wouldn't dare, Captain. My fellows are touchy as the devil. I'll simply say that the first two groups are designated. That means Dortlinger will be in charge if you're proved right—and he can be trusted."

"Yes," the captain admitted, "he can. Although you've got him nearly as crazy as yourself. Still, I suppose I ought to be satisfied to have to pull on the reins instead of having to use the spurs, eh? Request granted."

War was a sport to Herviller, as it must be to a true warrior. He showed an intense desire to win, without real hatred of the enemy. So that as he explained his plans to the Legionnaires who were to follow him, making quick diagrams, unfolding the staff-map, Dortlinger almost forgot that the stakes were lives. The shadow of the tall officer, thrown by the candle against the tent canvas, moved in quick, gigantic gestures.

"All right, we start at zero hour. At zero-thirty, we reach this ridge, according to schedule. We—our company—swerve right, or east, as you like. The native infantry covering our battalion's flank is pushing through the ravine and along the ridge marked seven-six on this sketch. We keep on, and at the end of the first hour, we're there—"

Herviller's finger indicated "there" on the map; he puffed at his cigarette and swept the eager faces around him with a glance.

"Get the idea? It's then zero-one-ten. The supporting artillery is moving to a new position. Down slope a bit from us is that *koubba,* or minaret. They're no suckers, and they're not inside where a shell could do them in. Here's a plane photo.

Small trenches all around. Probably have a machine gun, or at least an automatic. They think we're going to wait for a Stokes mortar or a cannon, so they take it easy."

The sub-lieutenant slapped his hand on the plank supporting his papers, laughed.

"All of a sudden, there's the bunch of us coming down on them. I take the right, Dortlinger the left—grenades, grenades, and more grenades. The balance of the section slants in from one side, while we're keeping them busy in front. We clean out the spot. With us anchored there, beating right and left with the automatics, the whole battalion can use that dump as a hinge for its progression. Saves us fifteen to twenty minutes, and we may have a chance to cut off their left wing—"

Dortlinger nodded. He could see the whole thing, see it even more clearly than Herviller believed. The quick rush from cover, the lieutenant's long legs sprinting, the Riffi opening fire. Such stunts often saved time and lives in the long run, but all too often killed off the officer in the lead. But he was beginning to have faith in Herviller's luck.

CHAPTER 2

At dawn the next morning the battalion was moving northward, an elongated khaki segment crawling over the buff and green slopes, one link of that queer, insect-like monster, a mobile group on the march.

Light fog fleeced close to the ground. In the mist ahead, shots rang out, and at times, the marching men could see the darting flames of the discharges.

Behind them, in the rapidly emptying camp, the artillery was starting out, and a trumpet squealed, brassy and clear, as Dortlinger hummed the words which praise the fertility of bombardiers' wives.

Eight o'clock. Ten minutes' halt.

Other infantry units swung by, deployed somewhere ahead under the warming sun, establishing contact. The rattle of fire-arms spread against the horizon, like the slow tearing of a gigantic cloth.

"The major's here—Collin's come—"

The battalion commander, having heard that his outfit was due for a hard show, had left the hospital on the coast and come to the front in a staff-car! And he was not even convalescing, a sick man! Every noncom, every officer not held by a definite task doubled toward the car. Dortlinger followed.

And he saw Major Collin, tall and leaner than ever, wrapped in a trenchcoat despite the hot sun, conversing with Captain Jarbon. The field officer was at least fifty-five, a graying man with an aristocratic, thin face, whose eyes gleamed like torquoise stones in his emaciated, yellowed cheeks. He leaned on a cane, and shook hands with his colleagues, had a word for each noncom.

"Hello, Dortlinger! Still in running order, eh?"

"Can't kick, Major," Dortlinger replied.

It was normal that the chief should know him, for he had served in the battalion for three years. But the personal greeting touched him nevertheless. Between greetings and congratulations, Jarbon was apparently urging Collin to take command, for the major shook his head, smiling.

"Nonsense. Came as a spectator. Couldn't walk a mile—sick man, really, convalescing. People would think I'd come to do you out of a job you've prepared, organized yourself. No, no, it's your show. I have lost touch. You have new officers—"

"Only one you haven't met, Major. Sub-lieutenant, came to replace Valkenar. You heard—poor chap caught one at the Jebel Timna. Yes, must have been a sniper! This new chap is a fine officer." Captain Jarbon smiled proudly. "He must be around—Herviller!"

Collin grasped his arm. Jarbon whispered in the major's ear, no doubt telling him of the three citations.

Herviller pushed his way through the others. He was obviously awed, rattled. He was less at his ease at this moment than he had been under fire. This was a great moment in his brief career, this meeting with a famous chief, almost under fire, a few seconds before action. He did not appear conceited at the minute, was more like an overgrown schoolboy coming forward to be praised.

He stopped four paces from the major, came to attention and saluted. Dortlinger was hopeful Collin knew how to speak to men, and would reward the young fellow with a few well chosen words. But there was an awkward pause.

The major's face was as hard as granite; his eyes looked through the sub-lieutenant. Herviller, who had offered his hand, flushed and straightened. Jarbon, puzzled himself, repeated in an audible voice: Three citations, one from the general!

"All right, all right," Collin said, "charmed—"

And he turned his face away, to dismiss the chauffeur. Herviller, thus ignored, spun on his heel and strode away. Dortlinger ran after him.

"What the devil is the matter with him? Does he always act like that?" Herviller blurted out.

"Like what, Lieutenant?"

"Don't be so damn tactful. He cut me dead."

"He's been sick," the sergeant tried to explain, with complete bad faith. "He's old too. They get that way about new faces in their outfits, sometimes."

"Did I kill Valkenar?" Herviller wondered. "Well, I've met your illustrious major—" he cut himself short, remembering he was speaking of a superior. Better to forget it.

Whistles were shrilling. Then the sections were on the path once more. Swiftly news of the incident had passed along the files. The Legionnaires in Herviller's section were angry and astonished. Why had the old man—and that term was no long-

er wholly affectionate—snubbed a fine guy before fifty witnesses?

"Maybe the fever affected his head—"

"Cranky from disappointment. Oldest major in the regiment."

Herviller walked fast, blindly. When he gave orders, his voice sounded hoarse, strained. Dortlinger was worried. In that mood, he would be reckless. Probably, Herviller would get himself killed to prove that the major had mishandled him!

"This is a lousy trade," he grumbled.

Nine o'clock: "Halt—at ease—clear the trail."

Again the column of Legionnaires rested, and other units marched by, Senegalese and Arab sharpshooters. News spread that the battalion should start the main attack at eleven. Meanwhile, other companies would clear the approaches to the hill positions. The sun was high in the sky; the men started to perspire.

Ahead, the rifle firing increased, and when the wind veered, the shrill yelps of the Negro infantry could be heard. Guns thudded, and white balls bloomed in the blue, hung still a moment, floated slowly into nothingness.

A Legion runner appeared, handed written messages to various officers. The mules of the ammunition-train were led further away from the road; there drivers unloaded them.

This spot would be the initial base of the attack. The ambulance men put up their tents. Lieutenant Delphin, who commanded the section assigned to remain behind and guard the cartridges and wounded, was coming to speak to Herviller. He appeared embarrassed.

The sub-lieutenant appeared to have recovered some spirit.

"Cheer up, old man," he invited. "We'll keep the *bicos* away from you. You can play some other time." He held out a silver case. "Have a cigarette?"

"Thanks, thanks," the other muttered. Dortlinger drew nearer, sensing that something unpleasant was under way. "Look here, Herviller, don't hold it against me. Each in his turn, you understand. I'm glad to get into the show, but sorry you're the one picked to stay here in my place."

"Here?" Herviller laughed. "The orders were issued last night. I have a special mission—"

"Look at this—" Delphin handed over a slip of paper. "You can read, can't you? I'm to go in with my company, and your section remains here. Look at the closing line: 'This order to be communicated to the sub-lieutenant commanding the second section. Signed: Collin.' "

Herviller looked blank.

"Why? Why didn't I get a direct order? What's all this?"

"You've got me," Delphin admitted. "I saw what happened back there. Whether you know it or not, you have done something in his cabbage patch, because he's a very decent old chap, really! I hope it will be cleared up—"

"Never saw him before in my

life!" Herviller protested. "And only heard of him since coming to Morocco. I don't understand why Captain Jarbon allows this—"

"Just a moment," Delphin interrupted, indicating Dortlinger with a glance.

He led Herviller aside. And the two paced up and down the mule lines, out of hearing, gesticulating and arguing. Obviously, Herviller was lashing himself into a fury. Delphin was growing angry himself because his colleague, unsportsmanlike, was grudging him his good luck. When the whistles called the end of the halt, he ran to his section, with a brief word of farewell over his shoulder.

"We're staying here," Dortlinger announced to his men.

This brought about an explosion of shouts and protestations.

"Shut up, all of you," the sergeant bellowed. "Think I like to twirl my thumbs here? What can I do about it? Orders are orders!" As they crowded upon him, sullen and loud, he shoved a face away here and there, absentmindedly using his knuckles once or twice: "Am I the major? I allow you to make a kick to him, the next time he's around. Shut up!"

He was angry with them, but he knew that they would calm down soon. What worried him was Herviller's behavior. The young man stood by the road, looking after the departing companies, clenching his fists. He was burning with rage and humiliation. Given guard-duty out of turn, during an important engagement, when he had three citations won in seventeen days!

Dortlinger saluted him and asked calmly. "Any orders, Lieutenant? Or do I take the usual measures for security?"

Herviller grasped his shoulder hard.

"What's wrong, Sergeant? What's wrong?"

"Change of commanders. Major Collin's evidently decided to take charge today, as he signed that order." The old sergeant choked over treasonable words, criticism of a beloved chief, warranted by this occasion. "You see, he feels that he can't let things go exactly as Jarbon planned —Captain Jarbon, I mean. Got to make a few shifts—"

"The devil you say! Why does he pick me?"

"I wouldn't know, Lieutenant."

The young officer's expression was not pleasant.

"You wouldn't, eh? Well, I'll find out soon enough."

"How, Lieutenant?"

"I'll ask him."

"You can't question an order, Lieutenant."

"We'll see. This is discrimination. He'll give me an explanation right away, if it costs me my commission."

Dortlinger shook his head.

"You're assigned here. Can't leave without permission. You must know that, Lieutenant."

"I'll risk it."

"And justify anything he's done?" Dortlinger grew red in his turn,

saluted automatically as if in apology for what he was about to say. "You're new, Lieutenant. I'm older than you and have been in harness a long time. Better drop it for the time being."

"And stay here, lose my chance—"

"I respectfully observe that the men are watching you, Lieutenant!"

"Why not?" shouted Herviller furiously. "Are they idiots? Don't you think they've heard about the way I was treated?" He lowered his voice nevertheless. "Let him remove me if he wants to. But why humiliate them? This isn't a question of discipline, but a personal matter. I'll chance it, going to see him. The attack is two hours away. Technically, I'll be quitting my assignment post, but—"

"And he'll have you court-martialed, technically!" Dortlinger unconsciously played the gruff, wise soldier. "When a man like the major starts anything, he'll see it through. Listen to an old-timer—"

"Dortlinger," Herviller snapped, "you bore me!"

"Yes, Lieutenant."

The officer paced back and forth nervously. Dortlinger pitied him. Most young leaders had such an experience early in their career. They suffered an injustice, a slight. That was bitter to swallow, at twenty-two! And, unfortunately, this man's character was unsuited to patience. But he must realize that he was up against the impossible, that any move he made would simply contribute to break him.

"There's an out," Herviller resumed. "I received no direct order."

"You got one transmitted by a senior officer," Dortlinger pointed out. "All you can do is to carry it out. You're covered. I heard the transfer." He sought to be helpful, to give Herviller a motive to wait without backing down too visibly. "You can send a man to obtain written confirmation, however."

Herviller looked at Dortlinger musingly.

"Right. I don't know whether you quite understand my position. Captain Jarbon will probably tell you more than to a private, so you'll go." The young man laughed. "I'll pass the buck to him! If he can give me his word that there is no personal slight for me, I'll stick here. If not, tell him that I'll disobey orders and go into the lines, alone. Not another word. You obey my orders. Take one of the mules and start at once."

As the mule trotted across the open ground beside the road, the sergeant had a chance to think, and felt that he was participating in an odd venture. Two and one-half weeks before, he realized, what he was undertaking would have appeared stupid. For he did not like Herviller at that time.

But days count as months in the field, and he would have risked far worse than a severe scolding for the young man. The sub-lieutenant was stubborn, childish, but Dortlinger was hardly the one to blame him. For he too, when about his age, had resented an injustice from a superior,

and had taken action. As a result, the other man had suffered a bruised chin and a cut lip—but that soul satisfying punch had wrecked Dortlinger's career in his homeland.

Furthermore, as a Legionnaire, he understood that somber moods can grip men, moods when death or punishment seem easier to accept than silence or inaction. Herviller was getting ready to do something rash; his nerves were tense and resentment blinded him to reason and safety.

"Don't know as I blame him," Dortlinger grumbled. "As they say in the prison camps, he has his 'dignity as a man' to uphold." He had seen convicts, fellows who bore hardships and oppression patiently, risk additional years and the firing-squad to preserve some minor privilege.

"Where's the Legion?" he hailed the cavalrymen on duty at each fork of the trails. And he followed the direction indicated. Two nude corpses, laid side by side, revealed to him that he had reached the emplacement of the first skirmish, fought in the mist of the morning. Some yards further, he passed two wounded men coming back from the lines, one with a head wound, the other gingerly holding a shattered arm.

Then he heard the whine of missiles overhead. And at the same time, he came upon the rear section of the battalion, resting in the fields. It was the last halt before going over the low ridge of sandy stone surging beyond them. The opposite side was under the enemy's fire. Fifty yards away, the officers were grouped, the four company commanders, the lieutenants. Last instructions.

He dismounted and approached them on foot. He contrived to attract Captain Jarbon's attention, and the officer came forward to meet him, spoke first.

"Serious trouble?" His tanned face was worried.

"Not yet, Captain."

"I was afraid," Jarbon stated softly. "I don't understand anything about this. Does he know?"

"No, Captain. He wants to find out."

Jarbon's face reflected his anguish. He was in a poor situation, Dortlinger judged, caught between having to blame a superior or allowing a worthy subordinate to be mistreated without motive.

"Tell him—" He hesitated, then made up his mind. "After all, what's just is just, *sacre nom d'un chien!* Tell him to be patient, until we can adjust all this privately. The major has resumed command, and there is nothing I can do at this time."

"He asked me to remind you that you have trusted him with a special mission, Captain!"

"Don't I know it!" Having no other escape, Jarbon grew angry at Dortlinger. "I don't have to answer to anyone. I obey orders. Tell him this is no time to be sensitive."

Captain Marsillon of the third company, a neat, small, campact officer, who looked like a dealer in antiques garbed as a Legionnaire, strolled near.

"The young fellow?" he asked simply.

"Yes. He—"

"You don't have to explain, Jarbon. I saw and I heard. Look here, the lad's in your company, so you have to do the talking. But I'll stand by. Yes, I mean just that—ask him. He must know it's torture to that boy to wonder what he's done, why he's in disgrace. To hell with passive discipline—we deal with men! Of all the cold-blooded actions— All right, but this isn't the first time Dortlinger's seen a mess."

Major Collin had sensed the trouble, and left the others to come near. He had his pipe clamped between his teeth, as usual on the field, but it was not lighted. The flesh stretched on his thin bones quivered.

"We have fifteen minutes," he announced. "Just received news that the others are progressing satisfactorily. It will be up to us to finish the job in good style."

Jarbon moistened his lips with his tongue. "Major, could I speak with you privately for a few moments?"

Collin braced his cane on the ground, folded both hands over the handle. His clear eyes swept Dortlinger, his two captains. Then a faint smile twisted his colorless lips.

"I very much fear it is no longer private." He lifted his head wearily. "I often felt it would happen, must happen. But it surprised me. I had no time—no time—to adjust myself, to prepare him. I have personal reasons that make it impossible, *indecent*—for me to touch his hand. He will learn why in time. And he'll thank me—"

"He protests his removal from the line, Major," Jarbon explained. "It wasn't his turn. Passive obedience—"

Collin shook his head slowly.

"That isn't the question. I can't order that lad into danger. For once, a personal reason outweighs the good of the service. There are certain things that a man simply cannot do. I know his family. His mother is still alive, isn't she?"

"Yes," Jarbon admitted, "however, I don't see—"

Collin lifted one hand.

"You will. I cannot sign an order sending that officer into danger, I repeat—because after killing her husband, I must do what I can not to be connected with the death of her son."

The three remained silent. It was one occasion when routine might yield to personal consideration. Dortlinger's eyes protruded from his head: Major Collin, the major, had killed a man, a Frenchman. He was—well, a murderer!

"I served some months in prison for it," Collin resumed with that same toneless, patient voice. "Sixteen months, and had to resign from the service. I was a captain then, a captain of Hussars. It took me thirteen years to be a captain again, in the infantry. Perhaps you understand what I mean. I had the curse of a woman on me, and of four children. I am afraid that some day she might learn who was her son's chief—" The

monotone faltered. "You understand?"

"Yes," Marsillon agreed dryly.

"It was foolish business. D'Herviller and I were old friends, had graduated together, served side by side. I was received in his home, like a brother. That—that officer, he is my godson. You see, a slight difference of opinion, in a public place. Too much wine, a word, a slap. An officer does not accept that—he had to challenge me unless I apologized. I was an officer. I would have been disgraced had I apologized, so we met, three days after. Didn't last two minutes. He lunged and missed. My blade slid beneath his arm, sank in. He died.

"The code of honor compelled us to fight, the law forbade us to fight. The affair could not be hushed up. There had been too many duels in the past years, and a few deaths. Civilians against the army, newspapers against me. Oh, they contrived to trick it a bit—I was tried by a judge who fixed it so that it became 'involuntary homicide.' Sixteen months and my resignation.

"Enlisted in the Legion as a private, at the start of the War. When the time came for me to get a commission, I had to tell the truth. So what I am telling you, several men know already. I want him out of my sight. He resembles his father." Collin nodded vaguely. "And there's his mother. Certain things can't be done."

"Why not?" Jarbon wondered. "I'm sure that the young chap would not judge it should interfere with his duty. He's brave and ardent, and the disappointment may break his spirit."

Collin shook his head.

"Nothing breaks their spirit. I was afraid he would be like—like the other, and refuse to wait. That is why I do not delay with subterfuge. Dortlinger, you may tell him. That should satisfy him. I cannot sign an order to put him in danger."

Marsillon laughed. "Odd—some unlucky beggar may get the job and catch it. And he won't be responsible at all."

"I've thought of that," Collin admitted. "So that I shall take charge of the two groups and carry out d'Herviller's mission."

"You're not a well man, Major," Jarbon put in. "I'm sure that someone would volunteer to—"

"And I'd be responsible for his death if he got killed." Collin gestured weakly. "No, I'll try to do it." He smiled. "What an insane business this is, once you try to depart from the routine, eh? Doesn't do to think about it."

"Proves the old army motto," Jarbon concluded. "One should not try to understand anything in the service." He took leave of the major and walked with Dortlinger, who located his mule. "Do as he says, old man," he advised. "Tell the lad. But keep it quiet otherwise." He shrugged. "It's a complicated business. The major said as much as was necessary, but old friends don't kill over a word. It's plain he loved the boy's mother, still thinks of her. And it's natural that he should consider the fellow—a

godfather should, eh, Dortlinger?"

"Sure, Captain. But do you think that the lieutenant will be satisfied with the explanation? He's pretty mad."

"If he isn't he's hard to please!" Jarbon declared. "However, hang on to him, and if possible keep him from doing anything stupid. See you tonight." The captain grinned and concluded piously, "Allah willing!"

CHAPTER 3

Dortlinger's return to his section was delayed because the fields were now swarming with auxiliary native cavalry, and he was stopped several times by European officers and noncoms who believed because he appeared to be in a hurry, that he had important news from the front lines. Batteries had unlimbered in the open and their guns thudded at a regular, even rhythm.

When he reached the mule lines, the first parties were forming, ready to carry the ammunition forward. Herviller's section did not participate in this work. It was idle, in support, with nothing to do unless the natives penetrated through the fighting troops.

From a distance, Dortlinger saw the sub-lieutenant prowling about, visibly nervous, like a hunting dog on a leash. The sergeant was surprised to recall his thoughts on the way up. He had believed, at heart, what Jarbon and Herviller had surmised also and been unwilling to mention—that Major Collin, in a dim, unreasoning fashion, had been envious of the young officer's dawning fame, had reacted to it jealously.

Such jealousy was more frequent than one might think. Aside from historical rivalries, as had existed for instance between General Joffre and Castelneau during the World War, the entire army was the prey of such unavowed passion. Not many years before, Dortlinger had seen sixteen men die, victims of rivalry between two leaders—and the odd truth was that those who had died had gone willingly, knowing the facts, having accepted the spirit of competition between two chiefs as their own!

And at one time or another, he had heard of this colonel or that major: "He's trying to break so-and-so's back. He hates his guts." It was part of the game, if not the prettiest part.

"*Eh bien,* what does the captain say?" Herviller asked.

"I'll explain, Lieutenant—" Dortlinger's eyes indicated his colleagues, who had drawn near. "My instructions are to report to you privately."

"Publicly insulted, privately soothed," the sub-lieutenant commented. "However, come along." A few yards further, he halted. "Well, Sergeant?"

Dortlinger looked at him, and was gripped with emotion. Like most professional soldiers, he was a sentimentalist when it came to family problems. Could he blurt out at once that the man who had killed Herviller's father was Major Collin?

"Lieutenant, you once told me that the major and yourself had the same given name: Ulysse. Do you remember anyone else with that name?"

"My godfather naturally—" Herviller said, impatiently.

"So—"

"What has that to do with this?" the young man challenged. He stared at Dortlinger, and his expression changed from cold resentment to bewilderment. "You mean that the major is de Solognes. That was his name. Oh—" Herviller's features relaxed. "Of course, that would explain. He doesn't know—of course, that explains!"

"Yes, Lieutenant."

The young officer repeated, unknowing, what the major had said. "I felt it would happen, that it must happen." He faced Dortlinger. "He killed my father, you know!"

"Yes, he said so, Lieutenant."

"And he doesn't know that I know why. Or did he say?"

"Mentioned a quarrel, difference of opinion—" Dortlinger indicated the shell-dotted sky. "There was barely time to say much. He did not know you were with us, and he was surprised. Could not offer his hand—"

Herviller had apparently recovered somewhat.

"Look here, where is he now?"

"With the advancing battalion, Lieutenant. The attack started some minutes ago. I heard our automatics as I was coming back."

"But he is too sick to carry on."

"Has to. Couldn't assign anyone to do your job, so he took it himself."

Dortlinger did not expect Herviller to be grieved by the prospect. Even a man who was not revengeful could not feel sorrow in this case. After all, Major Collin, or Captain de Solognes, had killed this man's father.

"I must see him," Herviller said. "See him before—"

"You can't leave here, Lieutenant."

Herviller cut short further protest. "You obey my orders and I'll attend to mine. I'm useless here, and you know it. Come along—"

The sub-lieutenant led the way to a section of Tunisian *Tirailleurs*, in support of its battalion ammunition echelon. The officer in command had been but a class ahead of his at Saint Cyr Military Academy. "Do me a favor? Two favors?"

"Anything but a loan," the other promised. "I'm flat broke."

"Chronic condition with you," Herviller laughed. "Listen, you take charge of my section. And seeing that you are mounted and have no use for your horse, lend it to me."

"Which way are you going?"

Herviller pointed toward the front.

"I'm not entitled to a horse according to regulations," the infantryman declared. "So there's no compensation if it gets killed. Worth five thousand francs—"

"I'll guarantee that if I get it killed—"

"Hope you do," the other grinned. "I'd make a profit." He laid his hand on Herviller's arm as the sub-lieutenant was about to swing himself into the saddle. "I suppose you know what you're doing? You're not get-

ting yourself into more trouble?"

"Hope not. So long—"

Herviller paid no more attention to Dortlinger. He turned the horse about and started off at a fast trot. And once more the sergeant felt his universe dislocating about him. From morning on, this had been a mad day. Now, Herviller had committed a major military sin. Abandoning his assigned post for a private purpose! Disobeying orders.

But what had Captain Jarbon said? He had urged Dortlinger to remain with Herviller. That also was an order! Moreover, it would be more interesting to be up there, in the combat, than with the mules. Three minutes later, the sergeant was mounted on a native cavalryman's stallion and on his way.

He knew the general direction followed by Herviller and soon caught sight of him.

In a very few minutes the mounted figure passed over the ridge behind which the Legion battalion had made its last pause. And shortly afterward Dortlinger reached that crest.

He reined for a second, scanned the panorama of round-bellied hills tufted with bushes, studded with boulders. Knots of men in khaki, small, mobile silhouettes, stirred against the ground. Galloping down the slope was Herviller.

He followed. And for many yards, he was utterly safe, for the natives across the valley were occupied by nearer targets. Then the air vibrated with the tenuous songs of passing lead. At this long range, the bullets had a weary drone. Right and left, he saw bodies, little yellowish heaps of torn flesh and bloody cloth. Fatigue parties already moved about, retrieving rifles, bayonets, cartridges officially, in many cases trinkets and money as well. And in the distance, the rifles and the cannon were making fresh victims.

"For you—you—"

This slug was nearer, tenser. More followed. Snipers had perceived the riders. And for marksmen a mounted target is somehow more alluring. Herviller must have realized this for he dismounted suddenly, turned the horse about and slapped its rump. Then he continued, on foot. Dortlinger imitated him. They were six or seven hundred yards behind the deployed sections of the battalion, which were advancing in bounds of fifty to seventy-five meters.

Herviller grew more careful, took whatever cover offered. And before long he progressed in short sprints. Again Dortlinger imitated him. It was not long before the natives noticed that as soon as one man started to run, another appeared, less than a hundred yards behind. And in no time at all, Dortlinger realized this meant danger to him. An expected target is easier to hit.

It was Herviller who solved the situation. He timed his rushes with those of the attacking troops, when attention was divided. Once, as he stretched flat, he turned his head toward the rear, and saw the sergeant

scuttling nearer. He waved his hand negatively, shouted something. Probably he was ordering Dortlinger to go back.

The sergeant fell, panting, at his elbow.

"You've got no business here," Herviller said.

"Neither have you, Lieutenant."

"I order you—"

"I'm following the captain's orders, Lieutenant."

Herviller grinned. "The major's over there, on the right, isn't he?"

"Sure." Dortlinger agreed. "He's where our section was supposed to be. The minaret is down slope from that next ridge."

"Twelve-three," Herviller glanced at his watch. "Or zero-one-three. They're right on schedule, so far. Listen, some of the batteries have ceased firing. Changing positions."

"Yes, Lieutenant."

"They'll be going ahead again in a minute," Herviller resumed. "If anything happens to me, Dortlinger, tell the captain to hand over an old letter in my wallet to the major. A long brown envelope, folded over once, with 'for Ulysse, at sixteen,' written on the outside."

"Understood, Lieutenant—"

"All right. There they go!"

Herviller had gathered himself, and sprinted ahead, on the very heels of the Legion section ahead of them. Dortlinger followed, and at the end of their rush they were among the combatants strung along the ridge. And not far below them was a scene on which the sergeant had never rested his eyes, yet which was very familiar—the white walls of the small minaret, and the curling earth cresting the shallow trenches.

Dortlinger had the answer to one question: It was a machine gun emplacement, after all; he recognized the rhythm of a German weapon, not too well handled. Then the gun was quiet, as if drawing breath. And the crash of the batteries had dwindled away almost entirely.

"Twelve-nine," Dortlinger mused. "Any moment now—"

Some of the Legionnaires continued firing, but many of the others were already holding grenades, crouching in readiness. Herviller was creeping behind the lines—missiles swept it from another angle—approaching the major. Dortlinger experienced a queer sense of unreality. The relationship of the two, this meeting under fire—no one would ever believe it!

Dortlinger watched the sub-lieutenant and drew his own pistol. This meeting, evidently, had been what Captain Jarbon had feared, why he had given the sergeant orders to follow. Heedless of the bullets, the noncom rose and started toward the two officers. He did not know what he was supposed to do, whether he had the right to act—Herviller was justified in his hatred, in his resentment. To him, the major was not the superb soldier, the sympathetic leader, the Bayard of the Legion—he was the man who had killed his father.

Collin turned and saw the young man at his elbow.

The major was sick in body, had suffered a severe mental shock that morning when faced by the son of a man he had slain; there had been the humiliation of explaining his orders to subordinates, and the confession that he had been a prisoner. It was normal that he should be startled. But Dortlinger knew what he experienced was not surprise but sickening horror.

Herviller spoke, but Collin could not have heard him because of the shots. The elderly officer rose, started running down the slope. The sub-lieutenant followed, with the automatic in his fist.

The men who had been selected for the rush believed the time had come, surged to their feet and scrambled after them. Dortlinger reached Herviller's side. At all cost, he must prevent a personal tragedy in the midst of the combat.

"No one will notice—" he thought.

And he threw his massive body in the path of the young officer. They dropped together. As Herviller tried to rise, Dortlinger held him by one leg. The sub-lieutenant shouted, struggled.

"You can't do that. You can't touch him—"

"Let go, you idiot, let go—"

The grenades were bursting now. The machine gun had ceased firing. Dortlinger saw the young fellow's arm go up, felt a terrific impact on the side of his face. He lost his hold, rolled over and over, then was on his feet. There was a taste of blood in his mouth, his skull was an echoing aching vault. He tripped as his boot flew through space, tumbled again, into a shallow trench.

There were men around him, naked men with knives. Dortlinger felt that his own movements were slow, feeble, as in a nightmare. He did not discern faces and details then, but he was to remember everything with photographic clearness later—the glaring eyes, the beards, the teeth grinning at him. The butt of the automatic leaped back against his palm as he pressed the trigger repeatedly.

The way was clear—he went around the bend.

And there was Herviller, leaning over the major. God, he had killed him, he— Dortlinger grasped his young chief by the throat, pushed him back. He howled incoherent words: Revenge or not, this was murder—"Assassin, assassin!"

And without transition, it seemed, he felt liquid burning into his throat. He was on his back. There was the lip of the trench and a patch of blue sky above him, the oddly foreshortened figure of a comrade squatting nearby.

"Hope I didn't hit him too hard," someone said. "But Lieutenant, I thought he'd strangle you before I could bring the butt around."

"He's coming around," another voice spoke. "Come on, Dorty, take another swallow. You don't often get such stuff." It was in fact, excellent brandy. "What's the matter with him, anyway?"

Herviller had moved into sight. His head and shoulders were silhouetted against the sky. Beyond him, Dortlinger distinguished Legionnaires working with entrenching tools. The position was taken, and being prepared against a possible counterattack.

"A misunderstanding," the sub-lieutenant declared. "I count on you men to keep this quiet. My fault, really. How are you, Dortlinger?"

"Pretty well, Lieutenant." The sergeant made an effort. "Where's the major?"

"He's all right. Collapsed from weakness—"

"All clear," a voice called out. "Supports are moving up. We go on in two minutes—"

The hands holding Dortlinger released their hold. He was alone suddenly. His head throbbed furiously, and he closed his eyes.

Dortlinger had obtained a small mirror from the ambulance orderly. The doctors assured him there was no permanent damage. And his bashed face, the pair of black eyes from the extravasation of blood, would not even count as a wound! What angered him was that Captain Jarbon, when he had reported to him, after the battalion was taken out of the lines, had laughed.

"You did your best, Dortlinger," he said, clapping his hand on the sergeant's shoulder. "Don't be offended because I laugh—partly relief at having been able to iron all this business out. Had to report Sub-Lieutenant Herviller's absence from his post, but the major's returned it with a note in his own handwriting stating that there's no need for investigation. The matter has been dropped. I'm not at liberty to tell you any more."

And that apparently would be the end of it. No one seemed to know anything, save that neither the major nor Herviller had applied for transfer. Dortlinger was left with his battered head and his burning curiosity, until the sub-lieutenant dropped into the ambulance to see him.

"I owe you an apology, Dortlinger. Afraid I struck you pretty hard, eh? It's more simple, really. I thought I had made it clear when I spoke to you about a letter in my wallet, for the major. But you could not guess, of course. You're a man and a Legionnaire, so you understand human weaknesses. This all occurred because my father was weak, until the very day of his death.

"He was captain of Hussars, in those days, something to boast about. And he had a genius for getting into messes, and luxurious tastes. Horses, gambling, women. That all called for money, more money. He believed he could scrape through always, but there came an end. A bad night at cards, trying to recoup—the invariable belief in his luck, a signature here and there, and convenient funds that belonged to the regiment. Then the alternative: A scandal, prison—or suicide.

"To be publicly branded as a thief

was unthinkable. And, to his credit, he thought of my future, a bit late. It isn't the most desirable thing in the world for an officer—for it was always known I would be in the service—to be the son of a suicide. In the most natural way, he sought his best friend, my godfather, then Captain de Solognes.

"He pointed out that once he was out of the way, my maternal grandfather, who had money and hated him, would provide for his wife and children. A suicide, he indicated, would spoil the girls' chances of good marrages, and he had sworn in Chuch to look out for my welfare. He did not wish to simulate an accident, for such accidents are always suspected.

"I don't know, I shall never know, how de Solognes reacted at first. But in the end he consented. There was a faked quarrel in a public place, a blow which made a duel compulsory according to a gentleman's code. My father had many faults, but he was brave. It must have needed nerve to give the signal agreed upon, to allow his friend's steel to jab at his deliberately exposed chest. He died honorably.

"Unfortunately, the duel had consequences for de Solognes which my father had not expected. The duels of the Dreyfus case were not so far in the past, and the law was upheld against the army code. De Solognes, who would have been forgiven a few years before, was treated like a criminal, jailed.

"Until I was sixteen, I believed that my father had been killed by his best friend over a petty matter. And I cultivated a deep hatred of the man. Something which my careless father had foreseen, and taken measures to stop. When I was sixteen, I was given a letter kept by the family notary. And I realized that de Solognes had given more for his friend, for me, than any man should give. I had always hoped to meet him, give him at least one satisfaction, that of knowing that his sacrifice had served.

"When I found that the major was my godfather, I grew afraid he would be killed before I could speak."

Dortlinger remained silent.

"What are you thinking about, Dortlinger?"

"That it was all very irregular, Lieutenant," the sergeant said at last. "Shows what happens when personal matters and sentiments are mixed with the service."

Herviller laughed.

"By the way, the battalion will be at rest for a week or so. Both Major Collin and I realize that you were the chief sufferer in this affair." He handed Dortlinger an envelope. "You'll find in this a special pass for Meknes, valid for six days, and sufficient money to keep from being bored."

Dortlinger was a good Legionnaire. He shook the hand offered him by Herviller with warmth and did not even think to remark that special leave, granted for favors not concerned with his appointed duties, was an abuse of the major's powers—and against regulations.

Ballade of a Gandy-Dancer

by
ADELAIDE COKER

I've worked the rails from Santa Fé
To Memphis, Dallas, and Van Nuys
A-bobbin' up and down all day
A-tampin' cinders round the ties.
My chow consists of shoo-fly pies,
And watered gin, and cheap red wine,
But every penny rescued buys
My old tan shoes another shine!

Now don't feel sorry for me. Hey,
A gandy-dancer never cries
About the weather, food, or pay,
But dances till the hour he dies!
I'm no Nijinsky, but the guys
Like me don't care too much, I'm fine,
As long as gandy-dancin' buys
My old tan shoes another shine!

Of course, the pious are quick to say
I'll never go where a good man lies.
Could be they're right, but come what may,
I'll ride the rails, sleep under the skies,
Curse and carouse—and skip the sighs.
For heaven to me is a shady pine,
A can of suds, and a dime that buys
My old tan shoes another shine!

ENVOY

I'm twice as free as a chippy's eyes,
So let the saintly fret and whine;
For I'll dance as long as dancin' buys
My old tan shoes another shine!

A Job for the Blacksmith

by RAYMOND E. LAWRENCE

Bascom couldn't match Bartell's speed with a gun but he knew how to strike when the iron was hot.

OUTSIDE Bascom's shop the poplars barely stirred. A bit farther up the street even the saloon drowsed. At the moment, in Peaceful Bend, nobody was being killed, shot at, or pushed around. Elsewhere in Utah on that August afternoon there might be molestations, intimidations, and plain killings; but right now for the small basking cowtown the nearest thing to even a threatening note was a dust-cloud that down the road was rising and gradually resolving itself into a horseman.

Clint Bascom was absorbed at his anvil when the rider dismounted and entered the shop. Bascom finished shaping a horseshoe, not hurrying. It was said of the ginger-bearded, leather-aproned man that he was independent as a hog on ice. But customers who knew him well realized he was simply a good craftsman with pronounced ideas.

Actually, Bascom was an inoffensive, kindly man. He was huge and powerful, but nobody had ever seen him in a fight. In a place where most of the adult male population carried sixshooters, Bascom had never been

observed with a firearm; he fixed guns for other men but apparently owned no gun himself.

Blacksmithing was practically Bascom's whole existence. He had deep pride of workmanship. It was generally believed that he would rather straighten a kingbolt than eat; reset a wagon tire than sleep. In odd times when he was not welding brake-rods, chains, or fashioning branding irons or the numerous other staple items of his calling, he tinkered with a vast miscellany of things including such household devices as coffee-grinders and churns; and, ranging downward, he fixed children's wagons and other toys, for these small jobs making no charge. He was a busily happy man; and now it appeared likely that someone had brought him some bread-and-butter business—likely a horse to be shod—and he looked up.

The man in the doorway seemed somber as a shadow—a tall, lithe sort of man, black-mustached, his hat black, gun-harness expensively tooled. He drew his righthand gun, the motion snake-smooth, presenting the pearl handle to Bascom.

"You fix guns," the man stated. "I want this one fixed."

Bascom, taking the gun, looked at it casually. "What's wrong with it?"

"Bent barrel."

The blacksmith removed the cylinder, slowly examined the barrel inside and out. He was taking his time because, right off, he hadn't liked the slick-appearing stranger. The sudden draw and the man's demanding attitude hinted that here was someone who maybe shouldn't be carrying guns.

"Can't you see the warp in it?"

Bascom nodded. "How'd it happen?"

"Mister, the point is, are you going to straighten it?"

"It ain't a bad warp," said Bascom. "If I monkey with it I might make it worse."

"Not from what I hear," the stranger said. "You seem to be quite an expert in your line."

"Guns ain't really my line," said Bascom. He had been replacing the cylinder; now he started to hand the weapon back. But the stranger was not to be put off that easily.

Refusing to accept the weapon, he said, "Look here, Bascom. You know you've got a name for bein' able to fix anything, includin' guns. Your reputation has brought me ten-twelve miles. I don't aim to take no for an answer!"

Bascom was bothered by a knowledge: *a few taps and that barrel could be straight as new.*

The stranger clinked to the anvil a twenty. "Don't mind payin' well for what I want."

Bascom put gun and coin on the block below the anvil. He turned and tossed a blank horseshoe into the forge, and said, "I'm pretty busy right now."

"Later . . . ?"

"Too busy then, too, I reckon," said Bascom, beginning to pump the bellows. His back was angled away from the stranger; he figured on

keeping it so. He had seen men like this before. *There was a little girl come into the shop sometimes. No father . . . Fixing some men's guns was like giving sharper fangs to a rattler.*

"Maybe you don't know who I am," the man said. The arrogance in his voice leveled. "I'm Bartell."

Clint Bascom had heard of this man. But he did not see why the name should change matters. He stirred up the coals, pushed the horseshoe into better position, and continued pumping the bellows.

Bartell waited through lengthening silence, baffled. Never had his name brought the kind of reaction occurring now. This thing *couldn't* be happening to him! Uncertainly he picked up his gun, reholstered it, fumbled for the coin. Staring at the insultingly preoccupied blacksmith, he felt an urge to blast lead into the fellow's spine, see him tumble forward into his forge fire. But he did not shoot. Instead, as though under a spell, he found himself leaving the shop.

In the sunlight he was aware of some boys sidling away. On his horse the implication hit him. Those kids must have witnessed his sorry showing in the shop; the story of it would get around, making him ridiculous. Chagrin with himself, anger at the smith, made him want to go back now and carry out his first urge to throw lead. It would give Peaceful Benders something really to talk about! But the law had a way of regarding the forthright shooting of an unarmed man as murder. There was the lesser recourse of getting even with bare hands; but on this basis the big blacksmith clearly would have an advantage.

Seething with frustration, Bartell dismounted before the saloon. At the bar he called for bourbon. The barkeep poured him a glassful, started to remove the bottle, blinked, left it standing. Bartell downed his whiskey, poured and gulped another and yet another drink. He commenced to feel better; helping soften memory of his late discomfiture, he noted how the barkeep hovered attentively and how the talk of two men farther down the bar had ceased. This silence, Bartell knew, was distilled from fear. These men had likely seen him some place or at least knew him by description. It all made Bartell feel like himself once more.

He beckoned the two men to him. They came obediently. He had them drink with him. He liked their scared way of eyeing his pearlhandled guns. But these guns reminded him suddenly again of Bascom and of an account that had to be settled with that all too independent man. Anger began working anew in Bartell. He wanted to pick a quarrel. He noted that the two men were armed. He commenced despising them for their all too obvious fear of him. Contempt for their probable ineptness with guns fed his ugly mood; and it was fed further by the thought that presently these very fellows would be

laughing uproariously over the episode in the blacksmith shop.

The hand of the nearest man trembled. Liquor slopped, ran onto Bartell's sleeve as it rested on the bar. Bartell moved back, glowering. He couldn't see how he could make anything out of this; but sometimes much could keep adding up out of little. The barkeep hastily began wiping the bar. He reached over and mopped at Bartell's sodden sleeve.

"Accidents'll happen," the barkeep said.

Bartell's anger subsided. That accidents could happen had given him an idea. He believed he now knew roughly how to take care of Bascom without running afoul of even such law as existed. As he mentally filed the idea away, he grinned at the nervous man who had spilled the whiskey. This man now offered to buy a new round of drinks, but Bartell expansively flung his twenty on the bar.

"Take it out of that," he told the barkeep. "And keep the change."

"Thanks, Mister Bartell."

"You might do me a favor, though."

"Sure—be glad to," the man offered eagerly.

"Just say to the blacksmith for me, that I'll be seein' him, about that job again."

"You'll be seein' him about that job again—"

"That's right," said Bartell, turning to go. "I'll be seein' him."

The men in the saloon waited until hoofbeats assured them Bartell was really gone. Then one of the men said, "Looks like Bascom may have got a little too high-hoss with somebody."

The barkeep grunted. "With a *killer*. Of all people!"

It was next morning when the barkeep, not having seen the blacksmith, delivered the gunman's message to the shop.

"So Bartell's goin' to see me again," mused Bascom. "Well, if you see him first, you just say I still can't fix no gun for him!"

"What Bartell means is, he's out to get you," the barkeep explained. "But don't let it worry you. The whole place is goin' to protect you."

"Why should anybody protect *me*?"

"You're our only blacksmith. Besides, there's men here that couldn't look their kids in the eye if anything happened to you."

"A man gets into something by himself," said Bascom slowly. "Reckon he ought to get out of it by himself."

"Not even a sawed-off shotgun loaded with buck could get you out of this alone," said the barkeep. "What we expect is, not just Bartell, an' not just honest shooting. You probably know that Bartell has followers—all of 'em professional gunartists like himself. They hire to big oufits. Now they're not busy. Some day they whoop it up into town, shootin' wild. Somebody gets hit—on purpose. It's an old trick, used by the

Bartell bunch plenty of times before. This time it won't work; they don't get into town!"

When the barkeep was gone, Clint Bascom began noticing things. Men passing his shop grim-faced. A customer stopping briefly for some finished work and for the first time in months carrying a pistol. About the town an atmosphere of tension that, as the forenoon advanced, seemed steadily to increase. It made Bascom feel sick. Peaceful Benders were not gunskilled like the Bartell crowd; nonetheless, angers would continue rising, determinations would harden, challenges would be flung. His own danger possibly was exaggerated, yet from it one thing would be leading to another until there was a clash and perhaps wholesale tragedy.

Bascom felt like calling people into his shop and telling them there was no sense in bothering so about him. Or maybe going to the saloon and having the barkeep tell folks that. But he suspected it would do no good. Perhaps he ought to go away. He paused at viseclamping a rod to be threaded. A boy had come into the shop.

Bascom handed the boy a compass. "Here you are, Johnny."

He watched Johnny make geometrical designs on a broad piece of board. This boy was a regular customer for the compass. Another youthful steady customer went in for the hand-drill. There were two little girls—twins—who sometimes came in to get the brass toes of their shoes brightened. Bascom decided it would be hard to leave this place.

He finished threading the rod, set it aside and took from a shelf a leather-bound account book. He wrote down: "1 set tongue irons, 2.00; 1 end-gate rod, .25." He riffled pages, noting names. Some were crossed out, cancelled by gunmen's lead. Too much of that. Unless he acted quick there would be too much more of it. So maybe he would *have* to go.

But there was another way. Not easy for an opinionated man like himself. But if it worked that was all that mattered now. It was really simple. Refusal to fix Bartell's gun had started the trouble. Agreeing to fix Bartell's gun might even yet mend matters.

On part of a blank page torn from the book he pencilled a note: *Bartell: You bring your gun. Clint Bascom.*

A stage, passing through Peaceful Bend and Bartell's town, was due today and would carry the note.

The stage came before noon; and it was not yet evening when Bartell appeared. He had come quicker than Bascom expected; but it was good, for the town's tension would the sooner be broken and thus not get out of bounds. Bascom put back into the forge a bar of iron on which he had been hammering, laid by his tongs, and looked at Bartell.

Smiling oddly, the gunman again presented butt-first at Bascom his right-hand weapon. As the blacksmith took it he saw ammunition being placed beside the anvil.

"What's that for?"

"Like your note asked," said Bartell evenly, "I come heeled. I'm seein' that you're heeled too."

"I just meant I'd fix—"

"Yeah, I know what you meant, Bascom. But the way you turned me down, some folks won't have to take *your* meanin'. Straighten the barrel if you figure it'll help you any; I'll give you time for that and to load up. Nobody can say you got no chance!"

Stunned by the way the note's terseness was being used as a gloss for murder, Bascom wondered what would happen if he simply refused to follow through with the mockery. The killer's eyes, cold, unblinking, gave answer enough.

Bascom looked at the gun to be repaired. Straightening the barrel would at least give him time to think. As on the day before, he removed the cylinder, began examining the barrel carefully inside and out. The act steadied him. He noted that Bartell had now adopted a casual, waiting attitude; the gunman leaned against the workbench, which was beside the door, and from this position he could see the shop's interior and the doorway itself.

Few persons, this time of day, would be on the street. Bascom felt no desire for interference. He had got into a bad mess by himself; it was only proper that he get out of it alone, however he could.

He had to think—not gumen's thoughts; he was no good at shooting. *He had to think as a blacksmith.*

He laid the gun on the anvil, selected a hammer, began cold-tapping the barrel. He used small, precise blows, feeling the response of the metal, noting its sounds, turning the barrel a little, his gaze narrowed to the job . . . And now the warp had been drawn out, all but for a final few taps. While delivering these he could let his gaze widen, seek for a blacksmith's answer that maybe would be among the things of the shop.

He noted a stack of iron in a corner; then the forge and the iron bar lying in the smoldering bed of coals. He focussed for a long moment on the iron bar. His seemingly unmoving vision circled on, passing racks of horseshoes, crossing the doorway's dust-dancing light to the bench. The vise there, its jaws agape as if hungry for some last piece of work, caught his attention. He saw that Bartell, alongside and being a tall man, was finding on the raised top of the vise a rest for his right forearm.

Picking up the gun, Bascom examined the barrel inside and outside once more. Nodding, he put back the cylinder.

"Done?" asked Bartell.

"One more thing to do," said Bascom. He moved to the workbench. "I've got to use the vise."

Bartell by nature could move at will with lightning-like rapidity. At someone else's will, his arrogance made him prone to take his own good time. He was slow in starting to shift his arm off the vise.

Faster was Bascom. With a craftsman's complex celerity he pushed Bartell's wrist between the jaws of the vise, twirled its handle.

Pain-spurred, for a second or two Bartell made a fierce effort to wrench free. This failing, he went for his gun. His left-handed draw was swift. But he couldn't bring the weapon to bear on the blacksmith now somewhere behind the bench; the rigidly clamped wrist and forearm prevented the necessary degree of turn.

Bartell grabbed for the visehandle, awkwardly with the hand that held the gun. Simultaneously metal rattled and, beating his move, a loop of chain flipped over the knob of the pendant lever, locking it. The chain would, of course, be fastened out of reach. He was firmly trapped!

With time to feel even more the sharp pinch of the vise's powerful jaws, the gunman began gasping oaths. With frantic force he managed to move the lever enough within its chained limits to ease the pressure slightly though not enough. But there was a way out. Simply remove the smith's fear of gunplay; killing him could wait.

"All right, Bascom, you win," said Bartell. He flung his gun to the clinkered floor. "Now let me loose!"

"That I'll do later," said Bascom.

A grimness in the blacksmith's tone gave the killer his first feeling of actual uneasiness. He saw the smith go to the forge, begin pumping up the fire. The reminder of the smith's insulting busy-ness of the other day produced in Bartell rage that for a moment displaced uneasiness. But there was a subtle difference about the working of the bellows handle now; something disquieting about the way the bar of iron was tong-jabbed deeper into the blue-white coals; and Bartell's uneasiness twitched back.

It did not diminish when he saw Bascom heave the bar to the anvil, begin pounding white-hot metal to a point.

Bartell began to sweat.

Fascinated, he watched the deliberate hammering. Suddenly it ended, the bar was thrust back into the fire, Bascom moved doorward.

The smith closed, chained the door. At the bellows again, he brought the reheating bar to a new, white incandescence. He picked up the bar with the tongs and walked toward the workbench. Bartell's knees grew weak. He felt sick.

He managed to croak out, "What's the idea, Bascom?"

"I'm turnin' you loose—with a chance to pick up your gun," said the blacksmith.

The viselocking chain was slackened; Bartell began unclamping his arm himself. His former terror was displaced by a surge of confidence mixed with contempt. Only a fool would pit a bar of iron—even hot iron—against a professional gunman's gun!

The pistol was lying on the ground where it had been flung. It was not more than three yards distant. The blacksmith, tong-gripping the bar,

was standing aside, giving plenty of room to get to the pistol.

Bartell, free, began moving. But not fast. He felt sure from the smith's already demonstrated fair play that not until the gun was touched would there be need for quick action. Reaching the gun, Bartell stooped slowly. The bar, a bright, heat-flinging red, was motionless. When Bartell's hand hovered just over the gun, the bar came a little nearer. It was at the height of his lowered head now and a yard or so distant; close—but a split-second shot could beat it!

Bartell grabbed for the gun. It slipped from his fingers. Cursing himself for having tried to use the vise-numbed hand, he lurched backward to escape a flaming sweep of metal, stumbled into a pile of chain, the bar fuming hot at his face.

Bascom backed off a little.

The gunman could hardly believe it, but Bascom was apparently giving him another chance at the gun. The dropped pistol was not in sight—maybe had been kicked aside by Bascom—but the straightened gun was beside the anvil.

Bartell advanced toward this gun cautiously. He found his movements remaining unchallenged. Anticipation of final victory made him grin in the murkiness. He wouldn't muff this time with a numbed hand.

He could use that hand however to hold the gun while loading with his left. Just one cartridge. Any attempt to insert more, Bascom probably would not allow.

Knowing that Bascom watched minutely and would act on the instant he thought loading was completed, Bartell began inching backward to get advantage of distance. The bar had been a yard away; it was a yard and a half when he had shoved in the shell and was shifting the weapon from his right hand to his shooting left.

He made the shift as the bar flailed through the air. Wind-fanned to revived redness, it came straight at Bartell's eyes. As a gunman he could have shot; there was time to have killed the blacksmith. But the onslaught of red-hot metal called up something older than any gunman's skill. Instinct made Bartell fling up his hands.

They warded off the bar, but for a little it seared itself to flesh, clinging, until with an anguished roar the gunman flung the thing loose.

Later, in the saloon, opinions were voiced.

"Bascom ought to have finished Bartell when he had the chance," a man said.

The barkeep had his own idea.

"Looks to me like the blacksmith done a good enough job as it is," he defended. "An' that ain't just from what folks saw lookin' through cracks in the wall. It was what they saw when Bartell came out of the shop. His *hands* I mean. Even when they heal he's washed up as a gunman."

After which remarks, the saloon drowsed. Outside Bascom's shop the poplars barely stirred. In Peaceful Bend there again was peace.

New Orleans in the flamboyant days of the early 1800's, where the Code of Honor ruled supreme and hot-blooded Frenchmen, haughty Spaniards and adventurous Americans stood ready to gamble with death at a careless word or a cocked eyebrow . . . Where insult was followed by a flash of fury, and fury by the ominous calm of challenge, the choice of weapons and meeting place . . . Where swaggering dandies washed out dishonor with blood drawn by dagger or bowie knife, hair-trigger duelling pistol or needle-pointed Creole rapier—and one duellist was reputed to be so deadly that he maintained a private cemetery in which to bury his victims.

Duellists' Parade

by
MEIGS O. FROST

TALK WAS growing edgy in Maspero's Coffee House that night in New Orleans. The year was 1802. Gentlemen, old and young, spoke quite passionately then of things like nationality and politics and opera and the beauty and charm of the ladies they knew.

They spoke quite simply, though, of things like honor and dignity, as matters not open to argument. They had a Code of Honor which took care of affairs like that. It was rigid as a steel pistol-barrel in some respects, elastic in others. But on one point it was absolute. Under certain conditions a man must have the courage to fight with deadly weapons, or stand disgraced.

They laced their discussion at Maspero's with the brandy of France or the rum of the West Indies. Both were excellent, but not conducive to calm.

So it was understandable to all present when voices rose above a certain pitch at the table where Cadet Dugas sat with Antoine Des Moulins, rich young planter. Also it was understandable when the voices sank to

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A Fact Story

a level, ominously calm and formal. Both young gentlemen rose, bowed formally, and departed by different doors.

They met next morning at the basin of the old Marigny Canal. The two young gentlemen, who had spent part of the night writing letters of farewell, arranging their earthly affairs, stood apart, very erect, very silent, while their seconds huddled. Then to each strode his second, frowning.

"It is stupid beyond words," was the message, " but you have agreed to fight with pistols, and only one pistol has been brought."

Cadet Dougas, as befitted a military man, made instant decision.

"Toss a coin," he ordered, "if it is agreeable to my opponent. The winner gets the first three shots. If the loser survives, he gets the next three shots."

Antoine des Moulins agreed. His second produced a coin, spun it high in air, and Cadet Dugas' second called "Heads!" It fell tails. One second watching, the other rammed powder, bullet and patch into the muzzle-loading flintlock smooth-bore pistol, primed it, and cocked it. They paced off ten paces, thirty feet.

"Gentlemen, take your places," sounded the order.

Cadet Dugas walked to the spot his second indicated, and stood rigid as on parade, facing his enemy. The pistol was handed to Antoine des Moulins. He raised it, waiting for the order.

"One. Two. Three. Fire!"

Finger pressed trigger. Flint clashed on steel. But no sparks flew. Antoine des Moulins had only two shots left. Under the Code of Honor, a misfire was a shot.

They drew the charge, reloaded the pistol, primed and cocked it again. Again they went through the routine. And for the second time the pistol failed to fire.

Cadet Dugas was annoyed. His face set in lines of supreme disgust. He did an unprecedented thing.

"Frote zongues a vous, sur le pierre! Il va parti coup ci la!" he called out to the seconds in Louisiana's colloquial French. "Scratch on that flint with your thumb-nail! Then it'll be sure to shoot!"

He frowned deeply at a new thought. Proof of courage under the Code of Honor demanded that no possible advantage be taken of an opponent. Obviously if Antoine des Moulins didn't know enough about a pistol to scratch the flint with his thumb-nail when it misfired, he was no pistol expert. "I think ten paces is too far for him," said Cadet Dugas. "Why not give him a better chance!"

Deliberately he advanced five paces toward his opponent, stood facing the pistol muzzle at fifteen feet.

And for the third time Antoine des Moulins lost his shot as the pistol failed to fire.

He shrugged his shoulders. He handed the pistol to his second. He straightened and stood there, silent, facing death at the hands of a man who had proved his own courage beyond any doubt. And three times

more that pistol failed to discharge.

Their seconds came forward, pleading that the two youths became reconciled. Both had proved their courage. Evidently *Le Bon Dieu* didn't want either to die that day. Honor had been satisfied with strictest formality under the Code.

The two young duellists looked at each other. Suddenly they both smiled. They embraced. Friends again, they returned to town and celebrated with New Orleans' ancient *"dejeuner a la fourchette,"* the breakfast of the fork, that lasts three hours.

That is the earliest of the recorded duels of New Orleans, and for a long time it was the peak of the city's fantastic personal combats under the Code. But others followed it, equally fantastic, far more deadly.

Despite laws against duelling, New Orleans was the scene of countless duels from the dawn of the nineteenth century into the 1880's. As many as five duels a day are recorded.

The newspapers of the time gave few details. When they did print stories of duels, those stories were "written under wraps," as today's reporters would phrase it. Often only first names and the initials of the last names were used. Ancient court records, private letters and manuscripts of reminiscences, in the main, have preserved such vivid fragments as have outlasted human memories.

New Orleans, which had been French from the founding in 1718 until 1769, then Spanish until 1803, then French for twenty days and American thereafter, through the Louisiana Purchase of President Thomas Jefferson from Napoleon Bonaparte, seems to have had no laws against duelling throughout the French and Spanish regime, though duelling was outlawed officially in France and Spain.

But hot French and Spanish blood, adventurous American blood, the absolute authority of slave ownership, the subtropical climate, the school of thought through the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century, bred duels in New Orleans as the swamps outside the city bred mosquitoes.

It is a strange duellists' parade that begins with Cadet Dugas and Antoine des Moulins.

William Clay Cole Claiborne of Virginia was appointed by President Thomas Jefferson as first American territorial governor of Louisiana, following the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. He was, by the way, the last governor of an American state to belt on his sword and go forth to battle against a foreign enemy invading his state, when he fought side by side with General Andrew Jackson against the British at the Battle of New Orleans, January 8, 1815. He was a popular hero then in New Orleans. But when he first landed in New Orleans to rule for the United States of America, he was as popular as the New Deal in Wall Street.

French Louisianan's distrusted Spanish Louisianans, but both joined

in hating American Louisianans, who were divided into hot political factions themselves. Duelling bloomed.

In the New Orleans *Gazette*, February 8, 1805, was printed this strange contribution:

> A DREAM—Methought it was a night in the month of December, A. D., 1804. All in the city were hushed and still. I was passing near the Government House. Suddenly the sound of music burst from the hall. I listened. The guests were dancing. Surprised, I advanced to the sentinel who was pacing with slow and measured steps before the building. From him I also learned the fact. His arms glittered in the moonbeams. At this moment the convent bell sounded. A noise, like rushing (rustling?) silk, was near. I turned my head; a female figure stood before me. She was tall and graceful, displaying a perfect symmetry of features. Her countenance was mild and beautiful, but shadowed with sorrow. I gazed upon her beautiful face. At that moment a new strain of music sounded; the shouts of the guests grew louder; they seemed to pierce her soul. She clasped her hands in agony, and turned her eyes to heaven. Then, meek, resigned, sorrowful and lovely, she bent her willing steps toward the graves of Louisiana.
>
> —FIDELIS.

It sounds today like the high-falutin language of a sophomore of 1804. If there was political poison in it, it has evaporated with the years. No man knows today the insult to a gentleman of honor in those few fancy words. But they stood Governor Claiborne's Louisiana administration on its ear!

Investigation showed that a young Louisiana lawyer, Robert Sterry of New Orleans, of American blood, was "Fidelis."

A council of state was summoned. After formal debate it was decided that Governor Claiborne, because of his official position, could not challenge Sterry to a duel.

Major Micajah G. Lewis, young, handsome, brilliant, brother-in-law and secretary to Governor Claiborne, within a week after that effusion by "Fidelis" was printed, challenged Sterry to a duel. Sterry accepted. They met next day with pistols at a distance of thirty feet.

Under the Code of Honor, if your pistol was discharged accidentally after you had taken your position, and your seconds had handed you the loaded weapon, it counted as a shot at your enemy. It was your hard luck; you must stand and receive his fire.

Lewis and Sterry stood face to face, ten paces apart, pistols in hand. The allotted second called out: "One. Two. Three. Fire!" Before Lewis could raise his pistol to level it at Sterry, his finger pressed the trigger; the ball ploughed the ground halfway between them.

The Code of Honor gave Sterry the right to shoot Lewis where he stood. But the young lawyer turned his back on his challenger, and fired into the air. The seconds pleaded for

a reconciliation. Young Major Lewis was obdurate. He demanded that the pistols be reloaded and that they continue the duel.

"As he wishes," said Robert Sterry.

Again they faced each other with loaded weapons; again the command sounded. Lewis' ball whistled past Sterry's ear. Lewis stood quite still.

"I believe—" he began; then he fell to the ground. He was dead, shot through the heart.

On his tombstone in St. Louis Cemetery Number One, oldest in New Orleans, are carved the words: *Killed in a Duel.*

But Governor Claiborne could fight for himself. In June, 1807, a little more than two years after his brother-in-law was killed fighting his political battles, Claiborne was in a hot fight with Daniel Clark, Louisiana's first delegate to the Continental Congress. Clark was a rich merchant and land speculator, a jovial, belligerent Irishman who lived with great gusto. As they stood then, "The lie was passed." Clark challenged Claiborne. Governor Claiborne accepted the challenge.

Consider for a moment the tumult in a modern American newspaper, the headlines, the art layouts, the columns of type, if they had an exclusive story of a pistol duel between the governor of the old home state and that state's member of Congress!

Here is the way *Le Moniteur*, official French Language newspaper of New Orleans, covered the Claiborne-Clark duel in its issue of June 13, 1807:

> Last Monday a duel took place between His Excellency, Governor Claiborne, and Hon. Daniel Clark, our delegate in Congress. They left the city last week and repaired beyond Iberville on the title-disputed territory. They met last Monday, and the governor received at the first fire his adversary's ball in the right thigh. He returned to the city last Tuesday night, and is as well as can be expected. Mr. John W. Gurley attended the governor and Mr. Richard R. Keene accompanied Mr. Clark. We shall give the particulars of this affair for the satisfaction of our readers as soon as we shall be able to procure them.

That was all *Le Moniteur* ever printed of the duel. The promise made to its readers in the last line of the story was never kept. The combat, it is known, took place at the juncture of Bayou Manchac and the Mississippi River, some ten miles south of today's city of Baton Rouge. The coffee houses knew that politics was the cause of the duel. The exact insult was lost when the last man who knew it died. A private letter reveals that it was a month before Governor Claiborne could walk again.

The Claiborne-Clark duel apparently was conducted along the classic lines of the Code of Honor. Others of the period were not. Vincent Nolte, who returned to the modern world in "Anthony Adverse" under his own name, after a century of obscurity, was a very real person who

came to New Orleans in 1806. He was one of those incredible human beings to whom almost anything was likely to happen.

A German born in Leghorn, Italy, he was a merchant, a financier, and the author of one of the most enchanting autobiographies the libraries hold. He had traveled the world. He had hobnobbed impartially with Napoleon Bonaparte and tribes of American Indians. He had visited the Vatican by invitation to confer with the Pope. He had been financial adviser to Von Knebeck, the premier of Austria. He had lent money to the Marquis de Lafayette. He had built river flatboats at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

It was his shipload of cotton bales that General Andrew Jackson had confiscated and used experimentally to build his ramparts for the Battle of New Orleans in 1815, and when Nolte protested, Andy Jackson told him, "If you want to save your cotton, why not get a gun and fight for it?" So Nolte did, and left a record of the performance of some Louisiana Creole gentlemen at the battle that has their descendants gnashing their teeth yet. Also he left a record of how General Jackson horse-traded him out of much of the value of his cotton, that makes certain worshippers of Old Hickory crowd anybody for the teeth gnashing record.

Vincent Nolte's own story of his "affair of honor" with Joseph Saul of New Orleans, cashier of the Louisiana Bank, is in his autobiography. A couple of weeks before they quarreled, explains Nolte, he "was mounting a fiery horse," was thrown, and—"my head was severely wounded, my right arm broken at the elbow so that I have never been able wholly to straighten it since." Up from his bed after this mishap, he records that he met Joseph Saul on a New Orleans street, they quarreled hotly, and Saul knocked him down.

Nolte admits that, unwilling to enter a fist fight in his crippled condition, he ran. But Saul pursued him, knocked him down again, and mounting his prostrate form, banged his head against a curb until Nolte lost consciousness. Along came one Mr. Nott, friend of Vincent Nolte, hauled Saul off his victim, and challenged him to a duel. Saul accepted.

They fought with pistols. Saul was shot in the body. "The only thing that saved his life," writes Nolte, "was the silk bandage he had wound many times around his body, which deadened the force of the pistol ball."

This, if true, was in violation of the Code of Honor, and Nott's seconds should have detected it. Weeks later, considering himself now physically able to walk out on the Field of Honor, Vincent Nolte records that he sent his challenge to Joseph Saul. Nolte writes: "He wrote me that 'having fought once already over our late unpleasantness, I cannot gratify your unreasonable request.' "

The element of comedy in this Nolte-Saul episode is entirely lacking in the affair of Faustin St. Amand of New Orleans, whose plantation the expanding city swallowed, and a man

who survives in the record only as "an American slave-dealer from Kentucky." They quarreled; no man knows why.

Faustin St. Amand slapped the Kentuckian's face.

Only blood could wash out such an insult then. The Kentuckian challenged. St. Amand accepted, and set the conditions.

They were to cross the Mississippi River at Canal Street, and fight on the west bank where Algiers, a New Orleans suburb, stands today. They were to stand three feet apart, back to back, each with loaded, cocked pistol, beside an open grave. At the word they were to wheel and fire. The winner would supervise the burial of the loser. It was Suicide Club stuff, but the unnamed Kentuckian was game.

Their seconds stood beside them. A goggle-eyed Negro who had dug the grave leaned on his spade and watched. The command "Fire!" sounded. Faustin St. Amand was a split-second faster than the Kentuckian. He shot his enemy through the heart. They buried him there. As far as any record reveals, he sleeps there yet, by the Algiers-Canal Street ferry landing, his grave forgotten.

In 1818 Louisiana passed an anti-duelling law. It was a beautiful gesture. Twenty-two years passed before it was even invoked.

Paul Pruet and H. Trouette, two New Orleans gentlemen of some means, who played occasionally with politics, quarreled violently over some point lost in the mist of a century. They met June 26, 1840, on Bayou Road, New Orleans, in *"un duel à la mort"* by mutual agreement—a duel to the death. Pruet's seconds were Lalouette, a famous fencing-master, and a man named Perez of an ancient Spanish family. Trouette's seconds were Monsieur Crozat, recorder of births and deaths for the Parish of Orleans, and Monsieur Latour, "a popular politician and wag." That was no spot for waggishness. A crowd of friends attended, tense and grim.

The duellists had agreed in advance to stand back to back, five paces (fifteen feet) apart, a loaded, cocked pistol in each hand.

At the command "Fire!" they were to wheel, and each fire his first shot with the pistol in his right hand. Each could use his second pistol any time thereafter he wished.

The command to fire rang out. Both men wheeled and fired with their right hand pistols. Incredibly at that distance, both missed. Each dropped his right-hand pistol; started shifting his remaining pistol from left to right hand. Those hair-trigger duelling pistols required cautious handling. Shifting hands, Paul Pruet by accident fired his second pistol into the ground.

There stood Trouette only fifteen feet away, a loaded, cocked pistol in his right hand, leveling it at his enemy. Under the Code of Honor he had full and complete right to shoot. The accident was Pruet's hard luck; that was all.

But from passionate partisans of Pruet amid the spectators rose the cry: "Don't fire! This is assassination!"

On the sidelines, halfway between the two combatants, stood Monsieur Crozat, second to Trouette, a cocked pistol in each hand, to enforce his authority to take part in the duel if a fighting second was required, as frequently happened. He glared at the crowd from which the cries had come.

"Who said this is an assassination?" demanded Monsieur Crozat. "I have two pistols here. One is at the service of anyone who tries to interrupt this affair."

No man took up the challenge.

Crozat turned to Trouette, his principal.

"You have the right to fire. Fire!" he said.

That moment, Paul Pruet signed his own death warrant. He looked sneeringly at Trouette, smote his breast with his clenched fist.

"Fire," he said, scornfully.

Trouette fired. Pruet fell, shot through the chest. In five minutes he was dead.

Monsieur Crozat again glared at the crowd of spectators.

"*Messieurs,*" he said, "the blood of this man is on your heads. Had you craved our generosity, we would have spared him. Instead of that, you provoked us." New Orleans rocked with the tale. Attorney-General Mazureau charged H. Trouette with violating the anti-duelling law of 1818. Pierre Soule volunteered to assist in the prosecution. Trouette retained Cyprien Dufour, M. M. Cohen and Charles Bienvenu to defend him. The court of Judge Canonge was packed to its doors; crowds filled the streets outside. Oratory of the time spouted like fountains.

Laughter rocked the court as Attorney-General Mazureau recalled the time the Marquis de Chatelet of France challenged Mirabeau and the caustic French leader wrote his challenger:

> Monsieur le Marquis, it would be very unfair for a man of sense like me to be killed by a fool like you. I have the honor to be, with highest consideration,
>
> —MIRABEAU

Mazureau spoke six hours.

The jury was out eighteen hours. Then it returned a verdict of "Not Guilty." Crowded courtroom, crowded street and square outside the doors, cheered madly for half an hour.

In 1845 a new Louisiana anti-duelling law was passed. The ink on it was hardly dry when Dr. Thomas and Monsieur Lebeau clashed in the Orleans Ballroom, scene of the notorious Quadroon Balls, where the quadroon beauties annually paraded and men selected their mistresses as casually as their wives shopped for their frocks. It is a convent for Negress nuns today, on Orleans Street, just back of the ancient Cathedral of St. Louis.

E. Durel and E. Cazeres were selected as seconds. A pair of Creole *colichemards* were produced; long, needle-pointed duelling rapiers with triangular grooved blades.

A space was cleared in the middle of the ballroom floor, the duellists stripped off coats and waistcoats, and steel rang on steel. Dr. Thomas fell, "badly wounded," says a legal disposition. Dr. Tricou, summoned to attend him, saved his life.

District Attorney Laurent J. Sigur charged them all with violating the new anti-duelling law. Trial was set before Judge McHenry of the Criminal Court. The duellists retained John Grymes as defense counsel.

He was another incredible figure of the period, a duelling, hard-drinking, heavy-gambling lawyer. He had successfully defended Jean Lafitte, buccaneer of Barataria, against a charge of piracy. His fee was twenty thousand dollars gold.

Lafitte invited him to spend a month as his guest at his stronghold on Grande Terre, a sea island off the Louisiana coast. At the end of four weeks of historic revelry, Lafitte gave him a boat and a crew to take him back to New Orleans, with his twenty thousand dollars gold in canvas sacks. They skirted the Louisiana coast eastward; started up the Mississippi River. The convivial Grymes stopped over at many a plantation along the way. Poker, dice and drinking enlivened the visits. Grymes landed in New Orleans penniless.

District Attorney Sigur summoned Dr. Tricou as a witness for the state. Dr. Tricou defied state and court with, "It is contrary to my duty to divulge professional secrets," refused to testify, and got away with it. John Grymes made an eloquent plea to the jury that a gentleman must fight under insult or stand the unbearable brand of coward. The jury stayed out thirty minutes. They came back in hopeless disagreement. The whole case was dropped. Duelling went merrily on.

That same year, 1845, a group of young men of Louisiana's finest, richest families, known as "The Roistering Blades," were making merry. Two of them were Ferdinand Gayarre, of the famous Louisiana historian's family, and Charles Patton, brilliant young lawyer. No man heard the words that caused it, but suddenly Gayarre slapped Patton in the face. And they had been like brothers.

All of the group knew that meant death for Gayarre. Patton's skill with sword and pistol was uncanny.

Charles Patton rose, the mark of the slap red on his cheek. He drew a slow, deep breath. He did not look at Ferdinand Gayarre, who stood tense and white, awaiting the fatal words: "My seconds will call on you, sir." He looked at the group about them, instead.

"Come here," he said to that group. "Closer."

They gathered about him.

"Gentlemen," said Charles Patton, "you have seen Ferdinand Gayarre slap my face. You expect me, of course, to send him a challenge. I shall not do anything of the kind. My

reasons are locked here." He placed his right hand over his heart. "But," he continued, his voice hardening, "if any man here doubts my courage in the least, let him step forward if he dare, and I will make him change his opinion."

Not a man stepped forward or said a word. Ferdinand Gayarre suddenly burst into tears, rushed forward, embraced Charles Patton, and apologized. They were as Damon and Pythias until they died.

Into this scene came to manhood Edward Bermudez, who was chief justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court from 1880 to 1892. His pistol-shooting was as deadly as his legal logic, his swordplay flashing as his wit and oratory. He was a great lawyer, a great jurist, and a fearless duellist.

One of the group with whom he associated in New Orleans was Monsieur Lepouse, a dreamy, lovable scholar and poet, attached to the faculty of the College d'Orleans. One night at a table, over the wine bottles, the talk turned to the College d'Orleans. The words of the witty thrust Edward Bermudez made at the struggling young college do not survive. But Lepouse, who had been devoting himself to the wine bottles, flashed into sudden fury and publicly challenged Bermudez to a duel for the honor of the college.

Bermudez did not want to fight the man. He sought reconciliation. But with the stubbornness of the gentle when aroused, Lepouse refused all peace overtures. He even stipulated suicide conditions to the duel, though as challenger that was not his privilege under the Code of Honor.

"We fight with pistols at five paces," ruled Lepouse.

"But why?" demanded his stunned seconds.

"I cannot hit a barn door at ten paces," said Lepouse.

"Bermudez can drive a nail with a pistol bullet at twenty paces," he was reminded.

"*Certainment,*" said Lepouse, and added words that survive in New Orleans history: "*Il me tuera je le toucherai, j'en suis sur.*"—"Certainly. He will kill me. But I'm sure I'll wound him."

So next morning they met, with seconds and pistols, at Bayou Road near Bayou St. John. The fifteen foot distance Lepouse had stipulated was paced off. The seconds, sad-faced, started loading the pistols.

Lepouse, as unconsciously as today a man would reach for a cigarette, reached into his waistcoat pocket for his snuffbox. He had opened the lid and started to take a pinch when the instinctive courtesy and good manners of a lifetime took control. There was Edward Bermudez, his friend, standing close by. He had not offered him snuff before taking it for himself! With the gentle, winning smile by which all men knew him, Lepouse extended the open snuffbox to Bermudez.

Startled, Bermudez hesitated. One did not customarily take snuff from

a man one was about to face, pistol in hand, at five paces. Lepouse saw the hesitation, but misinterpreted it. He knew Edward Bermudez was a *bon vivant,* fastidious about his food, his wines, his snuff. "Macouba" snuff was the best man could buy.

"Prenez-en," Lepouse reassured Bermudez. *"C'est du bon. C'est du Macouba pur."*—"Take some. It's good. It's pure Macouba."

"There was something simple, yet grand, in that act," said one of the seconds later. "It was the alliance of valor, gallantry and good manners."

Edward Bermudez bowed, took the snuff, and a moment later the two men stood face to face at fifteen feet. The signal sounded. Lepouse fired. The ball sang past the head of Edward Bermudez. Then deliberately, Bermudez—who could have picked the button on Lepouse's shirt he wanted to hit, and hit it at that distance—fired past Lepouse's head. He couldn't kill the man whose snuff he had just taken. But he always denied it.

"That pinch of snuff, the kind and affectionate face of that scholar and poet fighting for the honor of his college, paralyzed my nerves at the moment of firing," Edward Bermudez said gruffly to a friend. If that was true, it was the only time in a long and stormy life that anything ever paralyzed the Bermudez nerves.

New Orleans newspapermen, in those days before the Civil War, took the prospects of duels as a routine part of their work. "Fighting Editor" meant something very specfic then. Don Jose Quintero of the old New Orleans *Picayune* staff considered his duelling pistols as much part of his working kit as his pencils and pens.

When Mrs. Eliza Poitevent Nicholson became publisher of the paper, the first woman publisher of any major American daily, Don Jose oiled his pistols and announced publicly that if any man felt wronged by the paper, he would accept all challenges on Mrs. Nicholson's behalf.

It was Don Jose who wrote the New Orleans Code of Honor, a revision of the classic French Code of Honor, and published it in pamphlet form; the only known official Code of Honor published in the United States of America. His son, Lamar Quintero, born in Mexico when Don Jose was representing the Confederate States of America there, later revised the Code of Honor his father had published, and re-published it in New Orleans.

In 1851 New Orleans was in political turmoil. Dr. Thomas Hunt was a veteran of the Mexican War, a passionate partisan of Henry Clay. His faction resorted to the ancient political strategy of "packing a meeting" that was to nominate the candidate for Congress for the Second Louisiana Congressional District. John W. Frost, city editor of the New Orleans *Crescent,* exposed the trick; the paper attacked it editorially. Dr. Hunt publically called Frost a liar. Frost challenged.

His seconds, Victor Kerr and Jo-

seph H. Maddox, arranged with Colonel William Bell and Edouard Bouligny, seconds for Dr. Hunt for the fight to take place at the Halfway House on Metairie Ridge, a suburb. There the police arrested them all; Judge Caldwell bonded them to keep the peace.

But by prior arrangement, they made their way individually to the parade ground back of Jackson Barracks, just below New Orleans. Dr. Hunt was a famous shot at flying birds with a double-barreled shotgun. There his seconds produced the weapons he had chosen; double-barreled shotguns loaded with round lead musket-balls, to be used at forty paces. Frost consented with: "It is his right to name weapons and conditions."

Both duellists missed both shots at first fire. No effort at reconciliation was made. At the second fire, Dr. Hunt's ball tore through Frost's breast. He was dead ten minutes later. Next day thousands marched through New Orleans streets, escorting his body to the steamboat that took it to Alexandria, Louisiana, for burial. No legal action was taken against Dr. Hunt.

Today in New Orleans, Exchange Alley stretches from Canal Street to Conti Street, between Royal and Chartres Streets, dedicated to prosaic pursuits such as laundries, saloons, small offices. But a century ago it was the alley of the fencing masters.

They were the professional masters-at-arms who taught sword and pistol to young Louisiana gentlemen—a part of their education as routine as languages, literature, mathematics, dancing and horsemanship. Their Salles d'Armes were crowded daily. The slither of steel sounded through open windows as men fenced, the crack of pistol as men stood with their backs to targets, wheeled and fired on command.

No college or university athlete today wears his "letter" on varsity sweater with more pride than did the young patron of one of these Salles d'Armes feel when he could say quietly: "*J'ai fait mes preuves.*"—"I've proved myself." He had faced his man under the Code, deadly weapons in the hands of each. He had proved his courage. He was a man.

Here in the Alley of the Fencing Masters in the 1830's and 1840's reigned such masters-at-arms as Lalouette, an Alsatian; Montiache, part Alsatian, part Swiss, a veteran of the armies of Napoleon Bonaparte; Cazeres, of Bordeaux; Baudoin, of Paris; the two brothers Rosiere, of Marseilles; Dauphin, of Paris; all white men. But there were Negroes, too, in that curious democracy of deadliness. Black Austin, "free man of color," was deadly with the small-sword. Robert Severin, free mulatto, was a master-swordsman, who was to die in battle in Mexico. Basile Croquere proudly bore the title of deadliest Negro swordsman in New Orleans.

Out of this narrow Alley of the Fencing Masters, only three city

blocks long, came fantastic history, bred of personal and professional antagonisms.

Lalouette figures in many an episode. Because his deadly skill and unflinching courage were so well known, he did not even blush when New Orleans roared with laughter at his clash with a simple Acadian farmer, in which the great Lalouette came out second best.

Lalouette had ridden on horseback to a country ball, given one Saturday night several miles up the Mississippi River above New Orleans. Drinking was heavy. The master-at-arms grossly insulted the Acadian farmer.

"You'll pay me for this," promised the farmer. Men laughed. A clumsy farmer against the great Lalouette!

"In the morning, little man," said Lalouette. "We are busy drinking now."

The farmer was nowhere in sight when, Sunday morning, Lalouette mounted his horse to ride back to New Orleans. But as Lalouette rounded a bend in the road a mile below, there sat the farmer on his horse. Lalouette rode straight toward him.

In the farmer's hand was a stock whip, with a short, heavy oaken handle, a long, plaited rawhide lash. Experts could cut buttons off coats with it at twenty feet.

As Lalouette came within range, the long lash snaked out. The thong at the end popped like a pistol-shot. A gash opened in Lalouette's cheek. Instinctively he flung up his arm to guard his eyes. Again the lash cracked. Through Lalouette's thin cotton coat and shirt the rawhide cut like a knife across his ribs. Blood stained the garments.

Now it sounded like a fusillade, the stock-whip lash cracked and popped so fast. Other guests at the dance rode into sight around the bend in time to see the mighty Lalouette reel and fall from his horse, unconscious. They knelt about him and revived him. The Acadian farmer sat his horse, watching silently. Lalouette staggered to his feet. Through slashed and bleeding lips he challenged the farmer to a duel.

"I accept," said the farmer. "You have challenged. So I name conditions and weapons. Double-bitted woodmen's axes at three feet."

"I fight no madman under madhouse conditions," muttered Lalouette, mounted, and rode on his way. And though New Orleans rocked with laughter at the tale, no man held Lalouette any lighter.

For all men remembered the duel between Lalouette and Montiache. That was a battle of titans.

Pupils of Montiache had deserted him for Lalouette, as the better master. Montiache raged.

"I'll show them who's the best man!" roared Napoleon Bonaparte's old soldier, and sent his challenge for a duel.

They met, formally, with seconds, on Gentilly by the bayou, a New

Orleans suburb. *Colichemards,* the Creole rapiers, were the weapons. Never, said the seconds afterward, had they seen such swordplay. Thrust, parry, riposte and thrust again, the combat lasted full ten minutes of fierce and spectacular swordsmanship before Lalouette's point ripped into the arm of Montiache. Blood spurted.

Instantly the blades of the seconds struck aloft the blades of the duellists. Under the Code, honor was satisfied. But not Montiache!

"That is not a good hit, my children!" he protested, in what the ancient record calls "his execrable French." He looked scornfully at his bleeding arm, shook his head fiercely.

"No!" roared Montiache. "That is a hit for little children! Here is the place where a real swordsman ought to strike! Here! Here! Here!"

With each of these last three words he pounded his clenched fist upon his chest.

"The fight goes on!" said Montiache.

Lalouette was willing. Again the slim blades crossed and rang. Again the dazzling succession of thrusts, parries, ripostes, feints.

Then with a swift feint and a desperate lunge, the blade of Lalouette slid over the guard of Montiache like a striking snake. It ran Montiache cleanly through the chest. It barely missed his heart.

No look of surprise or sudden agony contorted Montiache's face, the seconds swore afterward. It was a pleased smile, they pledged their word.

"Ah, yes! *That's* good! That one *is* good!" he said.

He walked steadily to the edge of the bayou. He stooped low, scooped up handfuls of water, and dashed them upon his sweating face, his bleeding chest and arm.

Then he turned and walked back to them all.

"Yes, indeed!" said the simple old soldier of Napoleon. "That was good! That *was* a good one! This man Lalouette, he is good too! Why, he could hit even me!"

Amazingly, Montiache recovered. More amazingly, he and Lalouette became reconciled, became close friends, entered into partnership. They opened the greatest Salle d'Armes New Orleans ever knew.

Daily it was crowded with pupils and spectators. Swordsmanship, marksmanship, were the football, baseball of that day. Among those spectators, one day in 1835, stood a slim blond youth with blue-gray eyes, watching intently the bouts of the young gentlemen with the fencing foils. From pupil to pupil moved Lalouette, stopping to chat with old friends among the spectators from time to time.

To one of them he complained bitterly of the scarcity of durable assistants to himself and Montiache. They were the men who spent endless hours giving the pupils practice in the lessons of the masters. They were the sparring partners of their day.

As the dinner hour neared and the spectators left, the slim blond youth with the blue-gray eyes remained.

"I would like to work here as one of your assistants," he told Lalouette.

"Can you fence and shoot?" demanded the master.

"No, but I can learn. And I can fight with the knife."

"You are engaged," said Lalouette. "What is your name?"

"Jose Llulla," said the slim youth. He gave it the Spanish pronunciation: "Hosay Yu-ya."

A knife-fighter was a gold-mine to a master-at-arms just then. The bloody mêlée known to this day as the Vidalia Sand-Bar Fight was the favorite topic of all fighting men. In that combat just across the Mississippi River from Natchez, James Bowie had emerged wounded but triumphant; the weapon that men still call the Bowie knife had received its baptism in human blood.

A passion for knife fighting had swept South and Southwest. It was the ultimate test of courage. Men faced each other, grasping Bowie knives in their right hands, their left hands holding the diagonally opposite corners of a big silk handkerchief, and thrust, slashed, stabbed at the word. The man who let go his corner of the handkerchief while conscious was disgraced.

Pupils flocked to masters-at-arms, clamoring to be taught the new art and technique. Lalouette, himself a master knife-fighter, had more of them than he could handle.

Jose Llulla's first tryout bout with Lalouette, with the blunt wooden knives the masters used for teaching, showed that he had not boasted when he said simply, "I can fight with the knife." The youth was a master of the weapon. His slim body had enormous strength and endurance. His speed and coordination were uncanny. His coolness, courage and control were absolute.

Lalouette learned that the lad was a native of Port Mahon, Spain, born in 1815, a loyal subject to King Ferdinand VII. He had gone to sea with his parents' consent at the age of ten, a cabin-boy on an American ship. Young Jose Llulla had sailed the world, and at fifteen was a sailor before the mast.

In those days a sailor's sheath-knife was as much a part of his costume as his trousers. Jose Llulla had learned his knife-fighting in forecastles from experts. He had found need to use that knowledge in wild and distant ports. Early in 1835 he had come ashore in New Orleans. He took the first job offered, that of bouncer in a sailors' waterfront boarding house and saloon. It was a man-size job. He filled it. Then, drawn by his love of weapons, he had wandered in his off-duty into the Alley of the Fencing Masters.

Pleased with his new assistant's knife-fighting prowess, Lalouette gave Jose Llulla swift courses of instruction in fencing and pistol-shooting. The youth proved to be a born master-at-arms. And his manner, voice, bearing, showed that he came of good blood, even though he had entered the Salle d'Armes through the back door.

Coffee-houses, gambling houses, the clubs of the day, began to echo with talk of this quiet, gentle-mannered, deadly youth who worked for Lalouette. Tirelessly each day he labored with pupils; practiced for himself. He was born for weapons and loved them.

Then the whispers began to circulate that Jose Llulla, the assistant, was a greater knife-fighter than Lalouette, the master.

New Orleans was a sounding-board. The whispers reached the ears of Lalouette. Rage gripped the great master. Publicly next day in the Salle d'Armes, when the crowd of spectators was thickest, he challenged the youth to a public exhibition with the wooden knives, a referee to count the points as each man made a hit. Jose Llulla accepted calmly.

All New Orleans called him "Pepe" Llulla, now. "Pepe" is the Spanish affectionate diminutive for "Jose"—the "Joe" to the English "Joseph." They pronounced it "Pay-pay Yu-ya." And that name has power to stir a glint in the eyes of New Orleans oldtimers yet. For the memory lingers of how the gamble-loving city of nearly a century ago bet itself wild on Pepe Llulla or on Lalouette.

The duel was fought on a stage before a record crowd. Moments of dazzling knifeplay followed. Lalouette found his every thrust parried by Pepe Llulla's blade, save those which whistled through empty air as the youth's marvellous footwork and lithe body-swerve made mockery of the old master's attack.

Pepe Llulla's points were piling up. Suddenly Lalouette lost his temper completely. Certain thrusts were barred in an exhibition bout like this, with wooden knives. A thrust to the abdomen was one, the deadly disembowelling slash that ended so many knife duels. Ribs were the target here. But Lalouette, mad with rage as applause greeted the knife-play of his young opponent, launched the disembowelling drive with the wooden knife.

Like a flash of light, Pepe Llulla parried the thrust. Like a flash of light he sprang in and delivered a terrific thrust to the ribs. Lalouette was hurled to the floor by the force of the blow. He lay there semi-conscious. When they picked him up, they discovered two of his ribs were broken.

Of course, after that, there was only one thing for Pepe Llulla to do, and he did it. He opened his own Salle d'Armes.

Incredible tales of his personal prowess with weapons sleep in old newspaper files of the time. His contemporaries hailed him as a master of rapier, saber and broadsword; of pistol, rifle and shotgun; and always of his favorite weapon, the fighting knife.

They record that with muzzle-loading duelling pistols he shot coins from between his friends' thumbs and forefingers at fifteen paces, which are forty-five feet. They report that at this same range with this same weapon he shot pipes from between

the teeth of his friends, who obligingly stood sidewise as volunteer targets. That gave a man distinction in New Orleans then.

They tell that at thirty paces (ninety feet) Pepe Llulla with his duelling pistol shot an egg off the head of his own son, "and often accomplished this feat for his friends." That with pistol, rifle, shotgun, he shot down objects tossed in air "until men tired of the sport."

From the 1830's into the 1850's, four or five duels a day were routine in New Orleans. When a man accepted the invitation of his friend to act as second in a duel, he went prepared to fight himself, and frequently did. Masters-at-arms were favorite seconds for their pupils and friends. By their very profession they could hardly refuse. It was a system that automatically made a duellist out of every master of a Salle d'Armes.

Added to these "normal" risks of the business, into New Orleans came swaggering men confident of their own deadliness as swordsmen and shots, who challenged famed masters-at-arms to duels as the quickest road to fame for themselves.

It was an exact parallel of the gunfighting frontier West of a slightly later date, when no man widely known as a deadly gunfighter ever knew what minute some glory-seeking stranger would try to beat him to the draw on any pretext or no pretext at all.

It was a dangerous road in a dangerous world those masters of New Orleans Salles d'Armes trod. But for those who survived, it was good professional advertising.

Pepe Llulla never boasted, his contemporaries agree. But they agree, too, that he never refused a challenge to fight, and that he accepted unquestioningly any condition any man who wanted to fight him cared to impose.

Some of those conditions were the news of their day. Daggers in a dark, locked room. Bowie knives inside an empty sugar hogshead. Revolvers, with each combatant holding diagonally opposite corners of a bandana handkerchief. Drawing lots for two duelling pistols, one loaded, one unloaded.

Pepe Llulla accepted them all. He accepted one other, but his second refused. He went to the designated spot alone. His opponent failed to appear. The opponent had proposed drawing lots to settle who should first take one of two pills, identical in appearance, out of a pasteboard box. One was harmless, one was deadly poison. Pepe Llulla even brought the pills and the affidavit of the pharmacist who compounded them, which he had assured pharmacist and notary on his word of honor would be burned before either pill was swallowed, to prevent legal complications for them.

"My seconds refused to take part in what they called an assassination," Pepe Llulla explained to his friends later. "I disagreed with them. The chances were even. It seemed to me merely a question of courage."

A known scoundrel once chal-

lenged a friend of Pepe Llulla. The friend accepted. Pepe learned of the affair, suspected some treachery, volunteered as a second. When all appeared on the "field of honor" the treachery swiftly came to light. The challenger's second was a newly-arrived German fencing master.

"I have come," said the scoundrel, "but I am too sick to fight. My second, however, will fight for me."

"My principal, too, is too sick to fight," said Pepe Llulla. "But I am happy to fight in his place. The German school of fencing always has interested me."

It was a perfect checkmate. Second faced second, the rapiers crossed, and within thirty seconds Pepe Llulla had run the German fencing master through the lungs.

"I see nothing to change my opinion of German fencing," said Pepe Llulla calmly, as he rolled down the shirt-sleeve over his right arm.

Then came the time when Pepe Llulla wrote international history.

One of the earlier Cuban revolutions against Spain started to boil furiously. The revolutionist selected New Orleans as the convenient headquarters for their "junta." Fire-eating Cuban patriots thronged the coffee houses, the saloons, the restaurants, the gambling palaces. In Spanish and English they told their opinion of the Spanish throne, predicted what they were soon to do to the troops of Spain. American adventurers joined them.

Pepe Llulla listened. He had been born a loyal subject of the Spanish throne. His forefathers had fought for it. He was a Spanish subject yet. He had never taken out American citizenship papers. He went home, sat down, thought awhile, and then went to a printing office.

Next morning New Orleans awoke to find the downtown section of the city placarded with posters in Spanish, English and French. In bold letters they gave the name of Pepe Llulla and his address. In bold language they gave the world the message that in the eyes of Pepe Llulla these Cuban revolutionists were traitors to the Spanish throne, and that contempt was the only emotion with which a loyal Spanish subject could look upon such traitors and their allies. And then in those posters Pepe Llulla challenged the whole Cuban revolution to a duel.

He made only one condition. He would fight them one at a time, as long as they cared to come, and they could choose the weapons.

New Orleans buzzed like a wasp-nest. All except Pepe Llulla. Calmly he left his home at his usual time, opened his Salle d'Armes. He kept his appointments with his pupils. He appeared at his usual coffee house at his accustomed time. Then, for Pepe Llulla, he made himself unusually conspicuous.

He strolled the streets. He visited saloons. He stopped and chatted publicly with friends. Men pointed him out to other men as the man who that very morning had challenged a whole

The CAMP-FIRE

Where Readers, Writers and Adventurers Meet

The passing of Tracy Richardson, in April 1949, recalled a vanished era of color and adventure, and his career received a good deal of nostalgic space in the newspapers. Arch Whitehouse, who wrote the account of Richardson's life, on page 44, was a close friend of that last great soldier of fortune. But let's let Mr. Whitehouse tell us about himself—and also something of Richardson's early exploits—

My earliest recollections involve my schoolboy efforts to make a living. I sold newspapers, delivered magazines, worked for a fruit peddler and on being yanked out of school before I had finished the eighth grade I found a job with Thomas A. Edison in West Orange, New Jersey. I really was an errand boy but I like to believe I had something to do with the invention of talking pictures. At any rate I used to listen to Mr. Edison's synchronized film and phonograph record and tell him whether I thought it sounded right. Mr. Edison was totally deaf at the time.

When World War I broke out in 1914 I deserted Mr. Edison and his inventions and worked my way across the Atlantic on a cattle boat. I joined a British Yeomanry regiment which went to the front on November 5th, 1914. We were of course quickly dismounted and put into the trenches—and by 1916 I knew that kind of warfare was not for me. I learn, but it takes a long time.

Late in 1916 I transferred to the Royal Flying Corps as an aerial gunner. My adventures in that particular phase would fill a book—and did, which Liberty published in 1935. I ended the war an acting but unpaid pilot Captain with sixteen Huns (and I still call them Huns) to my credit and about 1,000 hours of over-the-line flying. I returned to the United States and learned that since I had not fought at Chateau Thierry, I had been nowhere and done nothing. I also discovered that Peace was much tougher than War and since there were no ruptured ducks, G. I. bills or free college educations, I had to start from scratch. First I bought a book and became a cartoonist on a Passaic, N. J. newspaper. Next I learned how to use a typewriter and became a sports writer. Things might have remained that way had it not been for a guy named Lindbergh who resurrected the idea that men could fly, by flitting across the Atlantic in 1927.

I got out my old log book, a stack of paper and began rapping out air stories for the pulp magazines. I wrote 3,000 words a day for the next ten or twelve years and my stories turned up in the darndest places. I even have one printed in Chinese.

However I did make the *Saturday Evening Post, Collier's, Liberty, Esquire, Coronet,* the *American Magazine* and dozens of others here and

abroad. Two were bought by 20th Century-Fox and Columbia Pictures. But until now I could never break into *Adventure*. One of us certainly missed something.

When World War II broke out, I tried same old routine and got as far as Newfoundland where I put in some time with the Royal Canadian Air Force doing anti-submarine patrols on the North Atlantic. The U.S. Navy sent out a call for aviation writers and I did a stint covering all the Naval Air Training facilities and I logged a few more hours on everything from transports to catapult jobs.

Next I went to Europe with the 8th Air Force and did two long spells in Britain. I went into Normandy on the invasion where I devoted my interest to the paratroopers.

On my return Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer grabbed me for sixteen months, where I wrote the same movie script six times and finally called it a deal and came back home and am starting where I left off in 1939, I think. I live on a 40-acre farm in New Hampshire. I do not farm it as agriculture looks suspiciously like work.

This fellow Tracy Richardson I've been telling you about was probably one of the greatest characters I have met and I have met a few. He was the only soldier of fortune I ever heard of who really fought for his ideals—not for the dough. He deserved a much better fate but that's the way it goes. He once was offered a nice piece of change for his story by a movie company, but he refused because he honestly believed no movie producer would film it as it actually happened.

His story would make a great film, but you know Hollywood. When Tracy was sixteen he took his bindle and a .22 caliber pistol he had put together from odd parts and applied for a job at a lead mine a few miles from Lamar, Missouri which is better known today as the birthplace of President Truman. He was a slight-built lad at that time with choir-boy eyes. Against the burly background of a desert mine he appeared none too rugged for heavy work.

"What in heck do you think you can do?" the mine boss asked.

"Any job you give me," Tracy said and stared the boss down.

They made him assistant to the camp cook and when the pots and pans were scoured he was commandeered to check time for the paymaster.

Being the youngest in the camp and naturally curious about everything Tracy became the butt of many a camp joke, but the boy never complained or squealed. Then one day an emergency arose and young Richardson had to get astride a burro, ride into town and pick up the payroll. Four practical jokers decided to give the kid a scare . . . just for laughs.

Tracy was about five miles from the camp when four masked hold-up men suddenly appeared on the trail. One fondled a Winchester with professional dexterity.

"All right, son. Hand over that money or we'll shoot your ears off."

Young Richardson stopped, stared wildly and appeared to slide off the burro in a panic. Then there were four lightning-quick shots from somewhere under the burro's neck and four hold-up men lay kicking in the dust. That was the Richardson .22 Rattlesnake.

With no further consideration for his foes, Tracy remounted the burro, loped into camp and reported the hold-up attempt. No one believed a word of it until a foreman went out and gathered up the dead, dying and wounded.

"I knew they had no right to the money, so I took matters into my own hands," young Richardson explained.

The foreman said, "Damnedest thing I ever saw. All four of them hit in the same place—three inches above the navel!"

He was quite a guy, that Tracy Richardson.

A few words from Raymond Emery Lawrence ("A Job for the Blacksmith," page 72) on the occasion of his first appearance at the *Camp-Fire*—

I was born and raised in a logging region of western Washington; got overseas in the first World War with the 41st Division; have done a variety of things of which a few are: working on an Idaho ranch; salmon fishing commercially on the Lower Columbia; transcontinental traveling in connection with the U. S. Immigration Bureau; service as a deputy U. S. marshal for Oregon. Among my hobbies, I used to box, heavyweight; I like pistol target shooting; currently and for most of my life I have been obsessed by boats—together with my wife, who is also crazy about them, I spend as much time as I can sailing on Puget Sound. Another of my interests is, of course, writing. For some years in the twenties and into the early thirties I wrote for and had fiction published in magazines including *Argosy, Elks, Ace-High, Black Mask* and others. Circumstances arising out of the depression years, followed by the second World War, interrupted my magazine writing; I used such spare time as I had, collecting material, ideas, working intermittently on a couple of long books, one non-fiction, the other a novel. Now I once more have leisure really to write and I expect to make the most of it.

You may like a few words about the blacksmith story. A grandfather of mine was not unlike Bascom, blacksmithing in a little town in Utah in the 1870's and '80s. Last summer, in collecting pioneer lore from my mother, I got her father's old account book in which he had recorded kinds of smithy work done and prices charged; she also mentioned an episode in which a red-hot iron was used as a weapon. Character, incidents, atmosphere, with dashes of imagination, resulted in "A Job for the Blacksmith."

And Adelaide Coker who contributes the unusual poem about the railroad track worker ("Ballade of a Gandy-Dancer— page 71) reveals her source of inspiration for this peculiarly rhythmic verse—

This poem, "Ballade of a Gandy-Dancer," was accepted by William Rose Benét, for *Saturday Review* of *Literature,* but this great and kindly man died before he could use it, and it was returned to me.

Perhaps you would be interested to know that my idea for this poem grew out of an article, "Skid Row," published in *Collier's* a little over a year ago. This article mentioned that the first thing a gandy-dancer did when he came in for a few hours' rest from the railroad was to get not only one shoeshine a day, but three or four, and all these whether he had any soles left on his shoes or not.

George Appell, author of "Last Patrol," the Korean War story which

leads off this issue, is also *Adventure's* expert on the French Foreign Legion —and an adventurous guy himself, if we ever met one. You may recall that we reviewed his first novel—"The Tin Trumpet of China"—in this department a couple of months back. Since then it has been hailed enthusiastically by the critics.

In WW II, Appell served in North Africa, Sicily and India—and during the latter part of the war he was stationed in Asia with the Chinese Combat Command. Before the War, he was—successively—a newspaperman, press agent, U. S. deputy marshal in Puerto Rico, free-lance writer in Holland, Belgium, Germany, France and England; and advertising manager for an air service. He now lives on eastern Long Island surrounded by wife, son, cocker spaniels, chickens, cat—and "the fastest-flying ducks in Christendom."

When the late Georges Surdez wrote the Foreign Legion novelette "Affair of Honor" (page 50), he appended the interesting notes which follow, concerning the ancient art of duelling—

There is a law against duels in France, and in theory, killing a man in an affair of honor is manslaughter, wounding him is assault. Nevertheless, duels do occur, for I have seen them. There is nothing funny in the spectacle, either. An encounter with blades is thrilling, and even a duel with pistols gives you a strong sense of drama and danger. There was one in Oran when I lived there that I can't forget, because the name of one of the principals sounded like something out of a Dumas novel: Monsieur de Rougemont.

I don't leap at the conclusion that it was common knowledge because I knew it was coming off days in advance—the armorer who checked the weapons was a Legion armorer and a good friend of mine—but the police must have been tipped off. Nevertheless, the two plainclothesmen did not show up until all was over. No one was hit, not even the proverbial innocent bystander, but I did not feel like laughing.

In de Maupassant's story, "The Coward," a man becomes so nervous at having to fight a duel in the morning that he shoots himself to get the suspense over with. That is a fine study. The fear of a duel is made up of several fears—fear of death or injury, fear of showing fear in public, fear of being made ridiculous, and a variety of stage-fright. An encounter with swords must be tougher to face than one with pistols, for pistols are discharged in one second, while épées may be used for many minutes.

While in a sporting competition fencers are usually facing men of about their own class, duels offer surprises, as there has been no careful grading of the opponents. As in most good games, whether purely mental like chess or directly physical like boxing, no man who is not in the very top flight can be sure that he will not run up against some guy who'll make him seem awkward.

For a colorful history of the *Code Duello* as practiced by the hot-blooded gentlemen of nineteenth-century New Orleans, see Meigs O. Frost's "Duellists' Parade" in this issue.—K.W.G.

LOST TRAILS

NOTE: We offer this department to readers who wish to get in touch again with friends or acquaintances separated by years or chance. Give your own name and full address. Please notify *Adventure* immediately should you establish contact with the person you are seeking. Space permitting, each inquiry will be run three times. Requests by and concerning women are declined, as not considered effective in a magazine published for men. *Adventure* also will decline any notice that may not seem a sincere effort to recover an old friendship, or that may not seem suitable to the editors for any other reason. No charge is made for publication of notices.

Would like to locate a good friend, Albert Pierce from Avenue Joffre of Shanghai, China—came to United States in 1947. Believed to be in Los Angeles or possibly in Florida. His father is from the 4th Division of the U.S.M.C.—Mother's name Anne Pierce. Please contact L. De Cesare, 1445 Eddy Street, Apt. #5, San Francisco, California.

Like to get in touch with Leslie McCoy, my father. Home state, Oklahoma—ten years ago he was in Boise, Idaho. Probably is in carpenter or construction work—possibly in Alaska or Merchant Marine. Write Cpl. Robert J. McCoy, RA 18343266, HQ Btry, 519th F.A., Bn., APO 178-A, c/o Postmaster New York City, New York.

Will anyone knowing Bill Crotzer please ask him to get in touch with me. A very important matter is at hand. His last address was Braddock, Pa. L. H. Stearns, 133 Ross Road, Ashtabula, Ohio.

I was adopted when I was four years old, and have been trying to locate a living relative. Any information regarding Jack and Gladys Koskela—nee Hawthorne—or any living relative of theirs, please contact Mrs. A. Sturtz, 748 E. Armour Road Oconomowoc, Wisconsin.

Any information regarding John Francis Halle, born Pennsylvania about 1882, may have lived in Germany as a child—Merchant Marine seaman before World War I—Coast Guard during World War I and Merchant Marine engineer after World War I. Last heard of he was in Malta in 1938 on a merchant ship bound for the Orient. Please contact his son, William Francis Halle, c/o Aberdeen Agency, Room #114, 80 Warren Street, New York City.

I would like to contact Walter Jones whose last address was Jersey City, New Jersey. He is about 24 years old, wears eyeglasses, 6 feet tall, and weighed about 190 lbs. Last heard of him when we separated in the city of New Orleans in January 1946. At that time he was shipping with the Seafarers International Union. Please write William J. Whalen, 70 South Huntington Avenue, Boston, Mass.

I would appreciate hearing from anyone knowing the whereabouts of Ray L. Edwards, serial no. 33538649. We served together in Italy in 1943-44-45 with PWB (OWI). His home state is Virginia. Write Earl Marks, University of Oregon, Cherney Hall, Room 216, Eugene, Oregon.

Would appreciate hearing from any of the U. S. Marines who were members of the First Marine Aviation Force, Northern Bombing Group or the members of the First Marine Aeronautic Company during World War I. The Northern Bombing Group served in France and the First Marine Aeronautic Company did submarine patrol in the Azores Islands. W. P. T. Hill, Major General, U. S. Marine Corps, c/o Headquarters Marine Corps, Wash. 25, D. C.

ASK ADVENTURE

Information You Can't Get Elsewhere

The good old U.S.A.—Union of South Africa, that is.

Query:—I am writing to you for information about living and settling in Durban, Natal, because I have noticed that you show a preference for that wonderful city. I had the good fortune of visiting South Africa several times during the war and it was a case of love at first sight. I have been to Capetown, East London, and Durban. Durban is the place I am primarily interested in, but would appreciate any useful facts about South Africa in general.

Cost of living, standard of living, climate, business opportunities are some of the things I would like to know about Durban. There is one other important matter. What adjustment would an American have to make who is not visiting but is going to live there indefinitely?

I would like to know if South Africa has an Information Bureau or agency that supplies detailed information to immigrants. A friend of mine is interested in taking ten to fifteen thousand dollars to South Africa and plans to open a bar or small business in one of the cities. Naturally he, too, awaits your reply.

—William P. Murphy
Arlington, Virginia

Reply by Gordon MacCreagh:—Durban, is it, you're after goin' to live in? So what can I tell you without being accused of being in the pay of C. of C., Durban, U. S. A.?

You know the town and its appearance, its shops, hotels, scenic situation. Climate, then—if you haven't been the year round. Like Florida; not quite so hot nor quite so cold. You swim, fish, boat, play tennis, all the year round; you need in the house, no more than an electric heater on coldest days in June or July.

Living standard? Owing to cheap labor—that the white man is not going to let beyond its bounds so long as white men can hold Africa—you can live, American style, for about half the cost in America. If you *must* have American goods, (food and clothing), you naturally pay for your fancies; but there's lots of good cigarettes and stuff that a man can adapt himself to and not pay customs' duties.

Business opportunities? Ah! Not quite so good. What kind of business? Your friend who wants to invest in a business, bringing money in, will have practically no trouble. Definitely *no tax* on money (capital) brought in. But he would be wise to get inside of the law about *taking it out* IF he might later wish to do so. Income tax must be paid by foreigners on profits of business on same terms as local citizens—no discrimination.

BUT, if it should come to looking for a job in business, it wouldn't be so easy. For remember, other things being equal, the job will go, logic-

ally enough, to the national rather than to a foreigner—which isn't so different from right here at home.

About permanent settlement: Right at this immediate present I can't tell you exact terms. While U. S. Africa is not putting up any restrictions against immigration—of the right sort, the government was talking, just a few months ago, of introducing some regulation to the effect that, if a foreigner should want to settle and make his living out of the Union, he ought to have to take out citizenship papers in the Union and swear his loyalty to the country where he preferred to stay and make his living. Reasonable enough, though we don't do it here. I frankly don't know what is the condition of that proposal at this moment.

A lesser point is, if you should go there with children, they would have to learn Africaans in school along with English; for U. S. Africa is bilingual.

Business opportunities? There's room for a lot of argument here. There are those who maintain that Africa is the great coming land of opportunity. Others, of course, who say that South America is the land of the future. I don't stick my neck out on that. The argument, of course, is that those countries, largely undeveloped, unorganized by big business, now stand where America stood 60 or 80 years ago, waiting for the bright boys with energy, with push, with individuality, to come and grow with the land.

That sounds reasonable too. But it's not my fight.

For exact information as to costs of groceries right today and rents and British-made automobiles, you can write to Durban Chamber of Commerce, Natal, U. S. A.

Inquire, on behalf of your friend, the financier, what sort of a bar they would license.

Military history of the Civil War.

Query:—I am interested in the military history of the American Civil War and would like to do further reading into the subject. Could you inform me of the books which are considered to be the best along this line.

I would like to find some that go into a fair amount of detail on the campaigns and battles and do not spend too much time on the political background of the war, which several of the books I have seen tend to do. In other words I would like, if possible, a strictly military account of the war, the more highly accompanied by maps and battle plans the better.

If possible I would like an account which is objective, presenting the faults and strong points of the commanders on both sides.

Also, if the references you give are no longer in publication would you please inform me how to obtain them.

—Orval Hammermeister
Los Angeles, Calif.

Reply by R. G. Emery:—"American Campaigns" by Steele, would seem to be precisely what you are looking for. It comes in two volumes, one of text and one of accompanying maps, as used for years—may still be—as a text at the Command and General Staff School. The Infantry Journal Book Service, at 1115 17th Street, NW, Washington 6, D. C. has them at $10, but almost any used book store should have them also.

If you were to add possibly "Lee's Lieutenants," by Freeman, you could hardly do better. Although, since you

are looking for no more than an objective, factual account, Steele should be all you want.

Jobs are scarce in the Merchant Marine today.

Query:—Would you send me any information on joining the Merchant Marine or shipping out on a boat as steward or some such work? Please give me age requirements and general routine.

—James Wallace
Lubec, Maine

Reply by Kermit W. Salyer:—Sorry to have to discourage you, but I advise you to give up the idea of working on a ship, at least for the present. There are more experienced men than there are jobs. If you insist on trying to get a job aboard ship, the best thing for you to do is to go to your nearest port and inquire at a hiring hall of one of the seamen's unions about how to go about joining the union and taking out your seaman's papers. The unions have pretty tight control over shipping today and they have closed their books because of the over-supply of men, but you might be allowed to take out a trip card.

Sunday driving *vs.* the Speedway.

Query:—1. What is the average R.P.M. of a racing motor in comparison to a standard make auto motor?

2. Does the rear end of a racer reduce more or less than the usual 4½ for the standard auto?

3. Do the gear boxes (transmission) increase or decrease the R.P.M. compared to the usual 1 for 1 (in high gear) of the standard transmission?

4. On a track, such as the speedway, does a driver use brakes or does he depend entirely upon his motor compression? And how far around the curve does he travel before he gives gas to the motor again?

—Chuck Johnson
Philadelphia, Pa.

Reply by Walt Woestman:—1. The RPM of a racing engine will vary with the type and make. Unblown 270 ci. engines usually develop their peak HP at around 5,000 RPM, while the supercharged engines will turn seven to eight thousand. My own 91 ci. Miller seems to do its best at 8,200 RPM. A standard passenger car engine usually won't "stay together" at speeds higher than 3,500 RPM, although these speeds may differ in various power plants.

2. Rear end gear ratios vary with the size and surface of the track, also according to the engine. Taking the regular 220 ci. dirt track engine, a ratio of close to 6 to 1 has been found to be the best. This is for the half-mile tracks. The mile tracks would be somewhat higher in ratio and of course the Indianapolis track would call for a still higher gear. The only sure way to figure gear ratio is by the use of an engine tachometer, fitting a ratio which allows the engine to turn at its best speed.

3. I have never heard of any transmission using anything but the regular 1 to 1 ratio in high gear. Several manufacturers build an auxiliary gear box, which attached to the back of the transmission, allows higher, or lower, ratios to be obtained, much along the same idea as the quick-change rear end, but the actual transmission is still 1 to 1.

4. Almost always the driver uses brakes but deceleration is also helped a great deal by engine compression.

The question of how far around the turn a driver goes before he again feeds gas is unanswerable. It would depend on how fast he enters the turn: How the car handles while in the turn: Position of the car, such as being in a slide: Track surface and any number of other conditions.

The Lost City of Atlantides.

Query:—Where could I obtain a book, article or manuscript which would describe or nearly cover the subject which was the reason for Colonel Fawcett's expedition into the Matto Grasso—the so-called lost city of Atlantides (not Atlantis)?

I don't want to follow in his footsteps, but I have long ago plotted a story of such a city, and have never been able to get material to make it more romantic or believable, though this, naturally, would be fiction.

I understand that the original manuscript which aroused Col. Fawcett would be probably as impossible to obtain as some Pharoah's ring, but I wondered if there was some book or article or information which would describe the so-called city of Atlantides.

—Peter S. Brody
Barnesville, Minn.

Reply by Arthur J. Burks:—My friend, I don't know of anybody who knows more about the Fawcett story than I do, but can I make it believable, so that anyone will buy it? No! In fact, I just recently did 45,000 words on it as a science fiction story, and while a vast amount of it was *true,* it was called juvenile and utterly unbelievable.

Fawcett as you probably know, disappeared somewhere in northern Matto Grosso or in Para Province, east of the Matto Grosso, in the middle 1920s. With him were one of his sons and another man. Fawcett left word with his family that even if they didn't hear from him for five years, they were not to worry, but after twenty-eight years one can scarcely blame the family for wondering! One of Colonel Percy Fawcett's sons operates a commercial airline at Iquitos, last I heard—probably still does since he had a good business, but he believes his father is long since dead. At risk of being listed with the many crackpots who've gone Fawcett hunting—some of them to vanish in the jungles, also—I don't believe he's dead. Old, yes, but not dead; he knew the jungles too well, and the Indians, even wild ones, liked him. I suppose there was a manuscript—but if you know what kind of a manuscript you wouldn't be asking me, and if you don't, and I told you, I'd be violating a confidence—but you'll never get your hands on just the right one.

The story thread runs something like this: Away back in the sixteenth century a Franciscan priest, or Capuchin, but a priest, working his way through the jungles somewhere in Central Brazil, came to the pillars of an ancient, ruined city. Only the priest is mentioned, the priest having left the record, but he was with a party or he wouldn't have survived. The outfit spent the night at the ruins, surrounded by wild beasts, strange sounds, and balls of light about baseball size, that seemed to be something sentient that rose and fell and traveled through the jungles. Trapped sunlight? That's what Fawcett thought, and said—after, on one trip, he himself had seen "fireballs" against the side of a hill. But he never reached the hill, having turned back before he could. However, what

he saw answered the description of the priest. Later, in the 1600s, someone else reported the ruins. It was reported again in each of the two following centuries. Then Fawcett, who knew the jungles thoroughly, started hunting the place. There stories scatter out and you can hear almost anything, depending on the imagination of the teller, and how big a liar he is. But get this: Fawcett was sending stories back to Bell Syndicate, in New York city, a syndicate still in existence. I queried them—indeed I sometimes work for them—before going to Brazil in 1947, and was told that his dispatches appeared in the old *World,* up to the last one which ends with, "our Brazilian and Indian guides refused to go any further. I am sending this back by the last of them. We go on." That, approximately, is Fawcett's last word. I started running down the dispatches, but the old papers—you have to go into the files of the Annex of New York Public Library to get them—started going to pieces in my hands and my time was limited, and I wasn't hunting Fawcett, so I didn't locate a single story.

However, a bit later I learned that the last time Fawcett had really been seen was sometime in 1935 or so, and that I myself had visited the exact spot in 1946. Had he been seen? I don't know, maybe. I do know that two different people found and talked with him in 1946—trouble is that they both found him practically the same day at two different places, a thousand miles apart!

I've read "solutions" of the Fawcett mystery—including descriptions by "explorers" of places I knew were wrong because I knew the places, and the writers were misinformed.

Fawcett appears to have been a psychic. How much of that you accept depends on your experiences, and I have had some strange ones. Fawcett is supposed to have got much of his information about the *City of Light* or Atlantides, through a medium—it is never clear whether male or female—while in trance. The medium traveled with him as far as natural fear allowed. I've never found out anything about this medium. I have been told some strange things by trance mediums—strange things which panned out exactly on time, at the right place, and in amazing detail, which is one of the reasons I believe Fawcett to be alive.

Indeed I'd have gone Fawcett-hunting in 1947-48, but my medium—a close family friend who never does her stuff save in the bosom of the family, nor tells anybody she has the "power"—who was to provide me with latitude and longitude readings which would put me in about the right place—if the Indians left my head on my shoulders!—sent me the stuff from the Dominican Republic, where she was vacationing, and since nothing leaves Trujillo-land uncensored, the officials must have thought the letter to be some weird code. Anyway the letter never reached me!

Look, Brody, I could talk and write about Fawcett for pages, but just don't ask me to run on, or spill much in public like this, where someone might read, and run, and die in the jungles—for Fawcett's story is too enthralling not to follow; I know, because I'm still, after a fashion, at age 51, following it myself.

And Fawcett, 80 though he must be, is still alive—some say as a "White God of the Indians," some say a leper, some say . . . but all I say for publication is that I *believe* he is still alive, not a prisoner, but an exile by choice. Just a guess, but even to guess about it is fascinating, isn't it?

Ask Adventure EXPERTS

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SPORTS AND HOBBIES

American Folklore and Legend: *Songs, dances, regional customs; African survivals, religious sects; voodoo*—HAROLD PREECE, *c/o Adventure.*

Archery—EARL B. POWELL, *c/o Adventure.*

Auto Racing—WALT WOESTMAN, 2310 Midlothian Drive, Altadena, Calif.

Baseball—FREDERICK LIEB, c/o Adventure.

Basketball—STANLEY CARHART, 99 Broad St., Mattawan, N. J.

Big Game Hunting in North America: *Guides and equipment*—A. H. CARHART, c/o *Adventure.*

Boxing—Col. JOHN V. GROMBACH, c/o *Adventure.*

Camping and Outdoor Cookery—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Canoeing—H. S. M. KEMP, 501 10th St., E. Prince Albert, Sask., Canada.

Coins and Medals—WILLIAM L. CLARK, American Numismatic Society, Broadway at 156th, N. Y. C.

Fencing—Col. JOHN V. GROMBACH, c/o *Adventure.*

Fishing, Fresh Water: *Fly and bait casting; bait casting outfits; fishing trips*—JOHN ALDEN KNIGHT, 929 W. 4th St., Williamsport, Penna.

Fishing, Salt Water: *Bottom fishing, surf casting; trolling; equipment and locations*—C. BLACKBURN MILLER, c/o *Adventure.*

Fly and Bait Casting Tournaments—"CHIEF" STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Maine.

Globetrotting and Vagabonding—NORMAN D. FORD, c/o *Adventure.*

Hiking—Dr. Claude P. Fordyce, c/o *Adventure.*

Horses and Horsemanship—JOHN RICHARD YOUNG, c/o *Adventure.*

Lost Treasure: *Tales of lost mines and treasure*—RAYMOND DOW, 2922 164th St., Flushing, N. Y.

Motor Boating—GERALD T. WHITE, Montville, N. J.

Motorcycling: *Regulations, mechanics, racing*—CHARLES M. DODGE, c/o *Adventure.*

Piracy and Buccaneering: *Exploits, plunders, lives and deaths of pirates in history and legend*—DR. CHARLES H. KNICKERBOCKER, 12 Mt. Desert St., Bar Harbor, Me.

Rifles, Pistols, Revolvers: *American and foreign*—ROY S. TINNEY, Brielle, N. J.

Shotguns: *American and foreign; wing shooting and field trials; gunsmithing*—ROY S. TINNEY, Brielle, N. J.

Skiing—WILLIAM C. CLAPP, The Mountain Book Shop, North Conway, N. H.

Small Boating and Cruising: *Skiffs, sailboats, powerboats, outboards*—Col. ROLAND BIRNN, c/o *Adventure.*

Songs of Campfire, Foc'sle and Bunkhouse—HARRY KIRBY MCCLINTOCK, 3911 So. Pacific Ave., San Pedro, Calif.

Swimming—LOUIS DEB. HANDLEY, 115 West 11th St., N. Y., N. Y.

Track—JACKSON SCHOLZ, R. D. No. 2, Doylestown, Pa.

Woodcraft—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Wrestling—MURL E. THRUSH, New York Athletic Club, 59th St. and 7th Ave., N. Y., N. Y.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS

Anthropology: *American, north of the Panama Canal; customs, dress, architecture, pottery and decorative arts, weapons and implements, fetishism, social divisions*—ARTHUR WOODWARD, Los Angeles Museum, Exposition Park, Los Angeles, Calif.

Entomology: *Insects and spiders; venomous and disease-carrying insects*—DR. S. W. FROST, 465 Foster Ave., State College, Penna.

Forestry, North American: *The U. S. Forestry Service, our national forests, conservation and use*—A. H. CARHART, c/o *Adventure.*

Forestry, Tropical: *Tropical forests and products*—WM. R. BARBOUR, care of U. S. Forest Service, Glenn Bld., Atlanta, Ga.

Herpetology: *Reptiles and amphibians*—CLIFFORD H. POPE, c/o *Adventure.*

Horology: *The science of time and timekeepers*—JOHN W. MCGRATH, 434 W. 120th St., N. Y., N. Y.

Mining, Prospecting, anad Precious Stones: *Anywhere in North America, Prospectors' outfitting; any mineral, metallic or nonmetallic*—VICTOR SHAW, c/o *Adventure.*

Photography: *Outfitting, work in out-of-the way places; general information*—PAUL L. ANDERSON, 36 Washington St., East Orange, N. J.

Radio: *History, operation, broadcast, short wave; Television*—DONALD MCNICOL, c/o *Adventure.*

Railroads: *In the United States, Mexico and Canada*—R. T. NEWMAN, 701 N. Main St. Paris, Ill.

Sawmilling: HAPSBURG LIEBE, c/o Adventure.

MILITARY, NAVAL AND POLICE

United States Army—COL. R. G. EMERY, *U.S.A. Ret.*, c/o *Adventure.*

United States Coast Guard—LIEUT. C. B. LEMON, U.S.C.G., Ret., Box 221 Equinunk, Wayne Co., Penna.

United States Marine Corps—MAJ. ROBERT H. RANKIN, U.S.M.C., c/o *Adventure.*

United States Navy—FRANK HEROLD, 1647 Charon Rd., Jacksonville, Fla.

Merchant Marine—KERMIT W. SALYER, c/o *Adventure.*

Military Aviation—O. B. MYERS, c/o *Adventure.*

Federal Investigation Activities—*Secret Service, Immigration, Customs, Border Patrol, etc.*—FRANCIS H. BENT, c/o *Adventure.*

The French Foreign Legion—GEORGE C. APPELL, c/o *Adventure.*

Royal Canadian Mounted Police—H. S. M. KEMP, 501 10th St., E., Prince Albert, Sask., Canada.

State Police—FRANCIS H. BENT, c/o *Adventure.*

GEOGRAPHICAL SUBJECTS

★New Guinea—L. P. B. ARMIT, c/o *Adventure.*

★New Zealand, Cook Island, Samoa—TOM L. MILLS, 27 Bowen St., Feilding, New Zealand.

★Australia—ALAN FOLEY, 243 Elizabeth St. Sydney, Australia.

★South Sea Islands—WILLIAM MCCREADIE, Taylor Memorial Home, Ocean St., North Narrabeen, N.S.W., Australia.

Hawaii, Christmas, Wake, Canton, Midway and Palmyra Islands—CARL J. KUNZ, 211-3 Naska, Kahului, Maui, T.H.

Africa, Part 1 ★*Libya, Morocco, Egypt, Tunis, Algeria, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*—CAPT. H. W. EADES, 3808 West 26th Ave., Vancouver, B. C. **2** *Abyssinia, Italian Somaliland, British Somali Coast Protectorate, Eritrea, Uganda, Tanganyika, Kenya*—GORDON MACCREAGH, c/o *Adventure.* **3** *Tripoli, Sahara caravans*—CAPTAIN BEVERLY-GIDDINGS, c/o *Adventure.* **4** *Bechuanaland, Southern Africa, Angola, Belgian Congo, Egyptian Sudan and French West Africa*—MAJOR S. L. GLENISTER, c/o *Adventure.*

Madagascar—RALPH LINTON, Dept. of Anthropology, Columbia University, N. Y., N. Y.

Asia, Part 1 ★*China, Japan, Hong Kong*—THOMAS BOWEN PARTINGTON, Constitutional Club, Northumberland Ave., London, W. C. 2, England. **2** ★*Siam, Malay States, Straits Settlements, Java, Sumatra, Dutch East Indies, Ceylon*—V. B. WINDLE, Box 813, Rancho Santa Fe, Calif. **3** *Persia, Arabia*—CAPTAIN BEVERLY-GIDDINGS, c/o *Adventure.* **4** *Palestine*—CAPTAIN H. W. EADES, 3808

West 26th Ave., Vancouver, B. C. **5** *Afghanistan, Northern India, Kashmir, Khyber Pass*—ROLAND WILD, Savage Club, 1 Carlton House Terrace, London, S.W.1, England.

★The British Isles; Gibraltar, Malta and Cyprus—THOMAS BOWEN PARTINGTON, Constitutional Club, Northumberland Ave., London, W. C. 2, England.

South America, Part 1 *Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile*—EDGAR YOUNG, co *Adventure*. **2** *Brazil*—ARTHUR J. BURKS, c/o *Adventure*.

West Indies—JOHN B. LEFFINGWELL, c/o *Adventure*.

Baffinland and Greenland — VICTOR SHAW, c/o *Adventure*.

★Newfoundland—CAPT. LEO C. MURPHY, J. P., Great War Veterans' Office, St. John's Newfoundland.

Mexico, Part 1 *Northern Border States*—J. W. WHITEAKER, 2903 San Gabriel St., Austin, Tex. **2** ★*West Coast beginning with State of Sinaloa; Central and Southern Mexico, including Tabasco, Chiapas, Campeche, Quintana Roo and Yucatan*—WALLACE MONTGOMERY, Central Sanalona, S. A., Costa Rica, Sinaloa, Mexico.

Canada, Part 1 ★*Southeastern Quebec*—WILLIAM MACMILLAN, 89 Laurentide Ave., Quebec, Canada. **2** ★*Ottawa Valley and Southeastern Ontario*—HARRY M. MOORE, 579 Isabella, Pembroke, Ont., Canada. **3** ★*Northern Saskatchewan; Indian Life and language, hunting, trapping*—H. S. M. KEMP, 501 10th St., *E., Prince Albert, Sask., Canada.* **4**★*Yukon, British Columbia, Northwest Territories, Alberta, Western Arctic*—PHILIP H. GODSELL, F. R. G. S., 531 A. 15th St., South, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada.

Alaska—FRANK RICHARDSON PIERCE, c/o *Adventure*.

Western U. S., Part 1—*Pacific Coast States*—FRANK WINCH, c/o *Adventure*. **2** *New Mexico; Indians, etc.*—H. F. ROBINSON, 1412 West Fruit, Albuquerque, New Mexico. **3** *Nevada, Montana and Northern Rockies*—FRED W. EGELSTON, P. O. Box 297, Elko, Nev. **4** *Idaho and environs*—R. T. NEWMAN, 701 N. Main St., Paris, Ill. **5** *Arizona, Utah*—C. C. ANDERSON, 616 N. 3rd St., Phoenix, Ariz. **6** *Texas, Oklahoma*—J. W. WHITEAKER, 2903 San Gabriel St., Austin, Tex.

Eastern U. S., Part 1 *Maine*—"CHIEF" STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Me. **2** *Vt., N. H., Conn., R. I., Mass.*—HOWARD R. VOIGHT, P.O. Box 716, Woodmont, Conn. **3** *Chesapeake Bay and tributaries; inland waterways, New York to Florida*—COL. ROLAND BIRNN, c/o *Adventure*. **4** *Ala., Tenn., Miss., N. C., S. C., Fla., Ga.*—HAPSBURG LIEBE, c/o *Adventure*. **5** *The Great Smokies and Appalachian Mountains south of Virginia*—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn..

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